Parthenope: *The Interplay of Ideas in Vergilian Bucolic*

MNEMOSYNE SUPPLEMENTS MONOGRAPHS ON GREEK AND LATIN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

GREGSON DAVIS

BRILL

Parthenope:
The Interplay of Ideas
in Vergilian Bucolic

Mnemosyne

Supplements

Monographs on Greek and Latin Language and Literature

Editorial Board

G.J. Boter
A. Chaniotis
K.M. Coleman
I.J.F. de Jong
T. Reinhardt

VOLUME 346

The titles published in this series are listed at brill.nl/mns

Parthenope: The Interplay of Ideas in Vergilian Bucolic

By

Gregson Davis

BRILL

LEIDEN · BOSTON
2012

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Davis, Gregson.
Parthenope : the interplay of ideas in Vergilian bucolic / by Gregson Davis.
pages. cm. – (Mnemosyne. Supplements ; volume 346)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-90-04-23308-9 (hardback : alk. paper) – ISBN 978-90-04-23325-6 (e-book)
1. Virgil. Bucolica. I. Title. II. Series: Mnemosyne, bibliotheca classica Batava. Supplementum ; v. 346.

PA6804.B7D38 2012
871'.01–dc23

2012020425

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual "Brill" typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see www.brill.nl/brill-typeface.

ISSN 0169-8958
ISBN 978 90 04 23308 9 (hardback)
ISBN 978 90 04 23325 6 (e-book)

Copyright 2012 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.
Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Global Oriental, Hotei Publishing, IDC Publishers and Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill NV provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910, Danvers, MA 01923, USA.
Fees are subject to change.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements VII
List of Abbreviations IX

1. Prelude: The Poet as Thinker 1

2. Framing a Dialogue on Vicissitude: The Interplay of Ideas in *Ecl.* 1 17

3. *Fracta cacumina*: The Consolation of Poetry and Its Limitations (*Ecl.* 9) 41

4. Vicissitude Writ Large: The Ontology of the Golden Age (*Ecl.* 4) ... 63

5. Coping with Death: The Interplay of Lament and Consolation in *Ecl.* 5 79

6. Coping with Erotic Adversity: *Carmen et Amor* (*Ecl.* 2 & 8) 99

7. Erotic Vicissitude Writ Large (*Ecl.* 6) 121

8. "Ecquis erit modus?": The Vergilian Critique of Elegiac *amor* (*Ecl.* 10) 141

9. Postlude: *dulcis Parthenope* 163

Works Cited 171
Index 179

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study of the intersection of poetry and philosophy in Vergil's Eclogues has been nourished and stimulated by the engagement of graduate students in the seminars I have taught on the subject over many decades at Stanford, Cornell, Duke and New York University. Portions of an early draft have benefited from the frank scrutiny (what the Epicureans called *parrhesia*) of several scholars. It is a truism well worth repeating, however, that they should in no way be held responsible for any deficiencies or infelicities that persist in the finished product. Among them, Bill Race and Diskin Clay offered valuable suggestions for strengthening the argument of Chapter 6; David Sedley generously took time off from a very busy schedule to comment briefly and constructively on my representation of certain aspects of Epicurean thought as transmitted by Lucretius. Finally, I am grateful to an anonymous referee of *Mnemosyne Supplements* for suggesting ways in which details of my exposition might be refined and clarified. The shade of Parthenope has also played her part in nurturing my meditations on the poet as thinker.

Chapter 2 ("Framing a Dialogue on Vicissitude: The Interplay of Ideas in *Ecl.* 1.") is a considerably augmented version of an essay that first appeared under the title: "Consolation in the Bucolic Mode: The Epicurean Cadence of Vergil's First Eclogue" in *Vergil, Philodemus and the Augustans* (edd. Armstrong et al., Austin, Texas, 2004). A recently published article, "The Epicurean Critique of *amor insanus* in Vergil's Sixth Eclogue (*Vergilius* 57, 2011, 35–54) is a modified version of Chapter 6: "Erotic Vicissitude Writ Large: *Ecl.* 6."

Without the unwavering support and nurture of my wife, Daphne, my excursion into the dense woods of Vergilian bucolic poetry would have been even more protracted than it turned out to be.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Arr.	Graziano Arrighetti, ed. *Epicuro: Opere*. 2nd ed. (Turin, 1973)
Bailey	Cyril Bailey, *Lucreti De Rerum Natura Libri Sex*. 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1922)
BCGLP	M. Fantuzzi & T. Papanghelis, edd. *Brill's Companion to Greek and Latin Pastoral* (Leiden/Boston, 2006)
CCE	James Warren, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism* (Cambridge, 2009)
CCL	Stuart Gillespie & Philip Hardie, edd. *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius* (Cambridge, 2007)
CCGRP	David Sedley, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2003)
CErc	*Cronache Ercolanesi*
DL	Diogenes Laertius
DRN	*De Rerum Natura*
Coleman	Robert Coleman, ed. *Vergil: Eclogues*. (Cambridge, 1977)
Clausen	Wendell Clausen, ed. *Virgil: Eclogues*. (Oxford, 1994)
Enc. Virg.	*Enciclopedia Virgiliana* (Rome, 1984–1990)
Geymonat	Mario Geymonat, 2nd ed. *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*. (Rome, 2008)
Gow	A.S.F. Gow, ed. *Theocritus*. 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1950)
Gow-Page	A.S.F. Gow & D. Page, edd. *The Greek anthology: Hellenistic epigrams*. (Cambridge, 1965)
Hopkinson	Neil Hopkinson, ed. *A Hellenistic Anthology*. (Cambridge, 1988)
Hunter	Richard Hunter, ed. *Theocritus: A Selection* (Cambridge, 1999)
SEP	*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1997)
LSJ	H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, rev. H.S. Jones. *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1940; supplement: 1968)
Lipka	M. Lipka. *Language in Vergil's Eclogues* (Berlin, 2001).
Long-Sedley	A.A. Long & D.N. Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers*. 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1987)
Nisbet-Hubbard	Robin Nisbet & Margaret Hubbard. *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book 1* (Oxford, 1970); *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book 2* (Oxford, 1978)
Page	T.E. Page, ed. *P. Vergili Maronis: Bucolica et Georgica* (London & New York, 1965)
QUCC	*Quaderni Urbinati di Studi Classici*
RE	*Real-Encyclopädie der classichen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart, 1894–1978)
SP	Elroy Bundy: *Studia Pindarica* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1986)
Thomas	Richard Thomas, ed. *Virgil: Georgics. Vol.1, Books I–II; Vol. 2, Books III–IV* (Cambridge, 1988).
Us.	H. Usener, ed. *Epicurea*. (Leipzig, 1887).

Extant works ascribed to Epicurus are abbreviated as follows:

Ep. Men.	*Epistula ad Menoeceum*
Gnom.Vat.	*Gnomologium Vaticanum Epicureanum*
KD	*Kuriai Doxai*

CHAPTER ONE

PRELUDE: THE POET AS THINKER

> No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher.
>
> Samuel Taylor Coleridge[1]

This study of the Eclogues is based on the assumption that Vergil employs the bucolic apparatus partly as a means of exploring philosophical issues relating to the subject of human felicity (*eudaimonia*)—issues that were the subject of robust debate in contemporary philosophical schools. The "interplay of ideas," as I have elected to call it, takes place for the most part beneath the surface of the songs that are allocated to the various personae. In the course of extrapolating a philosophical undercurrent in the exchanges among Vergil's poets/herdsmen, I shall be focusing the analysis primarily on a set of issues that preoccupied (though by no means exclusively) the adherents of the Epicurean school, which was well represented among educated Romans during the tumultuous last century of the Republic.

My principal rationale for privileging basic ideas derived from the followers of the Garden is the textual documentation that has been steadily accumulating in recent years concerning the importance of Epicurean teaching in the intellectual *bildung* of the young Vergil. Thanks to the current efflorescence of international scholarship on the Herculaneum papyri, and the proliferation of recent studies that have refined our understanding of Epicurean thought, we now have incontrovertible confirmation of Vergil's close connection with transplanted Greek philosophers whose activities centered chiefly in the region of the Bay of Naples. A pivotal impetus to what may eventually prove to be an emergent "philosophical turn" in Vergilian scholarship has been a significant philological renaissance, whose center of gravity lies in the extant writings of the contemporary Greek philosopher,

[1] From *Biographia Literaria*. See Coleridge (1993) [1800] 25–26. The context is a discussion of Shakespeare's early verse.

Philodemus. A major outcome of this recrudescence has been the expert editing (and re-editing) of carbonized papyrus texts exhumed from the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, as well as invaluable contributions on the part of a new generation of scholars to a more nuanced interpretation of the fundamental tenets of Epicurean doctrine as refracted through these texts.[2]

Vergil, I hope to demonstrate in ensuing chapters, is a deeply philosophical poet, and this stable dimension of his œuvre is manifested in diverse genres throughout his entire corpus, including his earliest masterpiece, the Eclogues.[3] Since this approach to his bucolic poetry—a systematic investigation of the latent "interplay of ideas"—is somewhat revisionist in orientation, it is important at the outset to clarify the scope of my characterization, "deeply philosophical," and to address briefly the interesting question of why this aspect of his poetry has been largely confined to the philological margins.

To begin with, it is superficial, if not misleading in the extreme, to draw a firm dividing line between "poetry," on the one hand, and "philosophy," on the other. In my estimation, the invalid assumption of a clear dichotomy between these discursive modalities owes much of its staying power to Plato's tongue-in-cheek depreciation of poets in the Republic. A no less influential latter-day source for the presumed disparity between the two is a persistent post-Romantic strand of criticism that seeks, in various permutations and reincarnations, to elevate feeling at the expense of cognition in the sphere of the poetic.[4] As our epigraph from Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* shows, however, this tendency in Romanticist preconceptions regarding

---

[2] On the close connections (now confirmed by Herculaneum papyri) with Greek Epicurean teachers, chiefly Siro and Philodemus, among Vergil and his literary friends, such as Horace, Quintilius Varus, Lucius Varius Rufus, and Plotius Tucca, see the recent succinct summary in Janko (2000) 6. Philodemus, many of whose works have been recovered, albeit in fragmentary form, from the charred remains of the Villa of the Papyri, was, as is well documented, a contemporary of Cicero. Vergil himself is famously named in a Herculanean papyrus (PHerc.Paris 2). The presence of Epicurean philosophers in Campania is discussed *inter alios* by Gigante (1995); Sider (2005) 43–45; Sedley (2009). Examples of groundbreaking editorial work on the Philodemian papyri that are especially pertinent to this study include: Obbink (1996) [*On Piety*]; DeLattre (2007) [*On Music*]; Janko (2000) [*On Poems*]. For authoritative reassessments of Epicurean ethical doctrine, see e.g. Long-Sedley (1987); Asmis (1990); Annas (1989); Erler and Schofield (1999); Warren (2009); Tsouna (2007).

[3] I refer here exclusively to the securely attributed canonic triad: *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, *Aeneid*.

[4] A passage in Plato's *Ion* (533d–535a), however ironic in tone, may be regarded as a prestigious Classical precursor of this view.

poetic creation (as enshrined in the famous Wordsworthian dictum "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings")[5] was not equally shared by all the founders of the English brand of Romanticism.

A persistent strain in modernist (and, for that matter, so-called "postmodernist") aesthetic theory has been a polemical downgrading of the cerebral in poetry—a posture best enshrined in Archibald MacLeish's much-quoted line from his poem, "Ars Poetica:" "A poem should not mean, but be." The approach to the "extrapolation" of ideas that we shall be adopting here, however, is to be sharply discriminated from the specter that the New Critics of the last century were determined to exorcise from the critical discourse: the reductionist "heresy" that it is possible to extract a "message" from a poem. If, however, Archibald MacLeish's summary gnome that concludes his "Ars Poetica" ("A poem should not mean/but be") had not been included in the text of the poem, we would nonetheless have been able (in fact, encouraged) to extrapolate this very idea (an aesthetic principle) as a common denominator from the series of similes that constitute the vertebra of the poem up to the final couplet:

> A poem should be palpable and mute
> As a globed fruit,
>
> Dumb
> As old medallions to the thumb,
>
> Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
> Of casement ledges where the moss has grown—
>
> A poem should be wordless
> As the flight of birds.
>
> A poem should be motionless in time
> As the moon climbs,
>
> Leaving, as the moon releases
> Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,
>
> Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
> Memory by memory the mind—
>
> A poem should be motionless in time
> As the moon climbs.
>
> A poem should be equal to
> Not true.

---

5 From *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads*. See Wordsworth (1940) [1805]:756.

For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf.

For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea—

A poem should not mean
But be.

To invoke an even more paradoxical illustration from the sphere of the visual arts, we may reflect on the term "Conceptual Art," that was used to designate an influential aesthetic movement of the latter half of the 20th century—a term that in itself registers the ineradicable point that ideas ("concepts") are endemic to the artistic project. In short, the unfashionable task we have assumed in the analysis to follow is to reveal the underlying ideas *implicit* in the text, rather than to reduce the text to a propagandistic vehicle.

The redoubtable A.E. Housman, whose quasi-schizoid double life as formidable Latin textual critic and neo-Romantic poet has been perceptively described in a brilliant essay by Edmund Wilson, encapsulates the dogma in his lecture, "The Name and Nature of Poetry": "Poetry indeed seems to me more physical than intellectual."[6] Though Housman's pronouncement may seem an innocuous, albeit provocative, formulation of a post-Romantic cliché from the poet of "A Shropshire Lad," anyone who has read his English rendition of his avowedly favorite Horatian ode, "Diffugere nives …" (*C.* 4.4), will immediately have recognized that such a conviction about the "nature of poetry" inevitably leads to anachronistic retrojections of sentimentality into the worldview of the Augustan lyric master.[7] Vergil and Horace were intimate friends, even "soul-mates", as the latter makes clear in several of his works, and one of the cardinal intellectual experiences they shared was an abiding interest in philosophy that was in part stimulated and nurtured by their common participation in the study of Epicurean thought in the cradle of the Bay of Naples. For both of these supreme Augustan poets, the notion that poetry of whatever genre is dissociable from the realm of ideas would have been unfathomable.

[6] Wilson (1954) 115–128; Housman (1961) 168–195 (the quotation is from p. 193); in the same paragraph Housman describes the physical criterion of the experience of genuine poetry as "a shiver down the spine." For a more sophisticated acccount of the union of emotion, imagination, and thought in poetry, see the essay by Wallace Stevens, "The Figure of the Youth as Virile Poet" (Stevens [1942] 39–67).

[7] Otis (1967) contains an excellent critique of Housman's translation of this ode. On the philosophical basis of lyric "argument" in Horatian poetry, see below, note 25. In regard to Horace's Archaic Greek models, consult the foundational work of Fränkel (1975).

A conspicuous testimony to Vergil's philosophical orientation is foregrounded in the proem to the Aeneid, at the point at which he caps his brief opening invocation to the Muse with a provocative rhetorical question, "Does anger so intense inhabit the minds of gods?" (*Aen.*1.11: "tantaene animis caelestibus irae?"). The question, though prompted by a consideration of the anger of a particular goddess, Juno, is formulated in *generalizing terms*, as the plural, "minds of gods" (*caelestibus animis*) distinctly emphasizes. Vergil therein articulates an issue that bears the unmistakable imprint of the Epicurean conception of the divine, which excluded mental perturbation of any kind from the distant and felicitous existence of deities who lived in a state of permanent equanimity (*ataraxia*). Thus in the invaluable collection of Principal Doctrines (*Kuriai Doxai*) attributed to Epicurus, the very first item on the list proclaims the centrality of the idea that the gods are totally immune to the emotion of anger:[8]

> What is blessed and indestructible has no troubles in itself, nor does it give trouble to anyone else, so that *it is not affected by feelings of anger* or gratitude. For all such things are a sign of weakness.

In propounding the same tenet, Lucretius, who is the paramount purveyor of the thought of the movement in the Latin tongue, declares in the prologue to the *DRN* (1.44–49):[9]

> omnis enim per se divum natura necessest
> immortali aevo summa cum pace fruatur
> semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe.
> nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
> ipsa suis pollens opibus, nil indiga nostri,
> nec bene promeritis capitur *neque tangitur ira.*

> For the nature of divine being in its totality must enjoy immortal life in supreme tranquility, far removed and divorced from human affairs; for free from all pain, free from danger, mighty in its own resources, not needing us in any way, it is neither won over by our services *nor touched by anger*.

The generalizing cast of Vergil's theological intervention in his prologue to the Aeneid has been somewhat downplayed in the critical literature for the obvious reason that the narrative of the Aeneid goes on to exploit the convention of a celestial "divine apparatus" in a long tradition that goes back to the Homeric poems. The adoption of the conventional Olympian apparatus

---

8 *KD* 1. The English translation is from Inwood et al, p. 32.

9 The text of *DRN* is cited (with rare exceptions noted) from the OCT of Bailey (2nd ed). Following Lachmann, Bailey omits these lines (which are repeated at 2.646–652) from the prologue.

does not, however, subvert or erase a substantial philosophical subtext of the Aeneid, in terms of which dangerously extreme emotions (such as anger and passionate *amor*)—whether these possess the minds of gods, heroes or mortals of epic saga—are represented as fundamentally retrograde and ultimately self-destructive.[10] The Aeneid was, of course, Vergil's final *magnum opus*, but it is highly improbable, in my judgment, that his interest in ideas, such as the ethical ramifications of uncontrolled emotion, was somehow suspended between the formative years of his apprenticeship to Epicurean teachers and the period of composition of his epic—a putative suspension that would have left only the odd vestige of an occasional philosophical "digression" in the Georgics.

The relative scholarly neglect of the broader philosophical dimension of Vergilian poetry is a critical phenomenon that occurs even in reference to his explicitly didactic work. By way of illustration we may cite the famous passage towards the close of the 2nd Georgic in which Vergil expatiates on the notion that true felicity for humans is dependent on philosophical knowledge. The passage opens with the famous beatitude: "Happy is the person who succeeds in gaining knowledge of the causes of things" ("felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas") (2.490–492):[11]

> felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas
> atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum
> subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis auari

> Happy is the person who succeeds in gaining knowledge of the causes of things, and has trampled beneath his feet all forms of fear and pitiless fate and the bedlam of greedy Acheron.

Philosophical knowledge is here credited with anchoring true felicity in the removal of irrational fears and, in particular, the debilitating fear of death.

The Epicurean tenor of this assertion is obvious to any careful reader of the *DRN*.[12] Here a major factor that has tended to impede acceptance

---

[10] Whitman (1958) 181–220 eloquently explores the underlying metaphysical dimension of Homer's portrayal of Achilles' anger. Indelli (2004) 103–110 contains a nuanced exposition of the conceptualizaion of anger in the Aeneid and its relation to Philodemus' *De Ira*.

[11] My translation reflects the unconventional construal of *potuit* as a "gnomic" perfect. In my view, Vergil is not here claiming unique felicity for a particular person, be it Epicurus or Lucretius, so much as declaring that true felicity for any mortal is gained through the accurate knowledge of *rerum causas*. I return to this key passage in a more detalied analysis in the Postlude (below Ch.4, pp. 76–77).

[12] Cp. Farrell (1991) 178; 199. Page's commentary on line 490 strikes a judicious balance between particularity and generality in the reference to the Epicurean conception of *eudaimonia* implicit in the word *felix*.

of the full ramifications of the Lucretian derivation of the locus is the predisposition among many philologists to make a fetish of exact replication of lexicon and phraseology in juxtaposing text and intertext. However, underlying concepts and *topoi* are not always reproduced in the form of strict verbal adoption; instead, similar ideas are often purveyed by alternative, synonymous diction. With this more fluid concept of a "parallel" at the plane of thought as a guide, a primary aim of this book is to reach below the surface of merely lexical correspondences in the Lucretian allusions to extrapolate their shared epistemic basis.

The interpretation of the Eclogues, in particular, has been hampered, to a large extent, by a widespread tendency to overlook, or even to deny, its philosophical dimension—a tendency that has contributed vastly to its trivialization.[13] Perhaps nowhere else does the habit of downplaying the philosophical substructure of the Bucolic poems become more transparent than in the scholarly treatment of Lucretian allusions. It is widely recognized among philologists that the diction of the Eclogues is suffused with phrases and vocabulary that are clearly derived from the *DRN*.[14] A similar observation holds for Vergilian appropriations of Theocritean diction, and excellent analyses have been done on what we have increasingly come to refer to as "intertextuality" in the case of the Roman poet's imitation and adaptation of the language of his main Bucolic model.[15] In the case of the no less important Lucretian model, however, the study of allusions has been, to a large extent, limited to a more or less compendious documentation of "echoes" and "parallels," with only occasional forays into the domain of underlying ideas. Since it is a major premise of this investigation that ideas about what constitutes the happy life are at the thematic core of the Eclogues, a brief illustration of the conventional wisdom that tends, on the whole, to trivialize Lucretian allusions is in order.

---

[13] Even the late Marcello Gigante, who did so much to disseminate knowledge of Republican latin poets' association with Greek philosophical circles in the Bay of Naples, succumbed to the conventional wisdom of cordoning off the Eclogues from Epicurean influence (Gigante [2004]: 95–96). The subject of Epicurean ethics in the Eclogues as a whole is sketched in Rundin (2003). Cp. Chambert (2004).

[14] Lipka, 73–75; Hardie (2006); See the earlier work of Merrrill (1918); Martini (1986); Mizera (1982).

[15] The term "intertextuality" is gradually replacing "allusion" in contemporary critical vocabulary. See e.g. Hubbard (1995 / 1996). Recent usage has rendered these two terms into virtual synonyms, though this represents a departure from the original technical meaning of "intertextuality" as articulated by its originator, Kristeva (1984). Farrell (2005) provides a robust discussion of the theoretical controversies surrounding both terms. For a different approach to Vergil's allusive strategy in the Eclogues that interprets it as basically polemical, see Van Sickle (2000).

With regard the very question of the involvement of gods in mortal concerns (a corollary of the philosophical issue broached above regarding the proem to the Aeneid), Vergil makes a bucolic character, Damon, whose love is unreciprocated, complain that his *amata* behaves towards him in a manner that indicates she does not believe that gods concern themselves with human affairs—a belief that chimes with fundamental Epicurean doctrine about the detachment of divine beings (*Ecl.* 8.35):[16]

> nec curare deum credis mortalia quemquem
>
> and you do not believe that any of the gods is concerned with mortal affairs

On the basis of many significant allusions of this kind to ideas of an Epicurean cast in the Eclogues, this study traces Vergil's exploration of the cognitive preconditions for human felicity in a world compassed by vicissitude.

A particularly salient example of the prevalent discounting of ideas of a philosophical allure in the Eclogues is the disparagement of the mini-cosmogony ascribed to the Silenus persona in 6. 31–40. Although the overt borrowings of Lucretian diction in this passage are too conspicuous to go unacknowledged,[17] it has become sedimented *communis opinio* among eminent Latinist exegetes to claim that the cosmogonic account adumbrated by Silenus is not doctrinally pure in its Epicureanism, since it is contaminated with Empedoclean elements. But as Sedley, among other prominent historians of Epicurean thought have shown in detail, it is undeniable that Epicurus himself incorporated many Empedoclean features into his physical system, and this aspect of his material theory has been more or less faithfully reproduced in the work of his fervent Roman disciple, Lucretius.[18] The neglect of the broader implications of the Lucretian (and, *a fortiori*, Epicurean) provenance of the Silenus prologue on cosmic origins reflects a lag in Vergilian scholarship that has, on the whole, failed to keep pace with the vast advances in our knowledge of Epicurean thought that have taken place in the closing decades of the 20th (and have continued unabated into the 21st) century. As I intend to show in my discussion of *Ecl.* 6 in Chapter 7,

---

[16] See discussion of this passage in Ch.6 below, p. 115. For an authoritative presentation of the Epicurean beliefs concerning the gods see Obbink (1996) 1–23.

[17] See the thorough documentation of the borrowings in Lipka, 73–74.

[18] See Sedley (1998) 1–34. In relation to the question of strict orthodoxy, it is important to bear in mind that there is abundant evidence for lively disagreement among disciples of Epicurus concerning certain matters of doctrine. See e.g. Tsouna (2007) *passim*. See also Warren (2007).

Silenus' account not only accomplishes the rhetorical function of establishing his credentials as an Epicurean sage, but also equips him with an ethical platform on which to parade the exemplary mythological vignettes to follow.

Even at the level of strict verbal borrowing, Vergil's appropriation of Lucretius' diction is rarely fortuitous or casual. A salient case in point is the very terminology that the former employs to describe the generic affiliation of his Eclogues. Both of the key defining (and synonymous) terms, *agrestis musa* ("rustic muse") and *silvestris musa* ("woodland muse") are taken over unaltered from Lucretian verse.[19] It is therefore clearly inadequate to interpret these flagship phrases entirely with reference to Theocritean poetry, since the replication of Lucretian language nudges the reader to investigate the philosophical context in which the enunciations are made.

The reluctance among the majority of Vergilian scholars of the last century to engage in methodical examination of the implicit world-views of Vergil's bucolic personae may be partially explained by yet another critical bias that we may label, *faute de mieux*, "aestheticist."[20] By this I mean to describe *grosso modo* a widespread critical perspective that focuses disproportionately on stylistic and formal techniques of composition (*ars* at the expense of *res*). Much fruitful and insightful work has been conducted under the aestheticist microscope, for example, on such matters as Alexandrian and, more precisely, "Callimachean" norms of style, and our grasp of the literary history of the late Republic has been vastly enriched as a result.[21] What we now commonly refer to under the modern rubric of "aesthetics" was indeed discussed *avant la lettre* in late Republican Epicurean circles, not least by Philodemus and his associates, as is amply documented in the latter's extant treatises, *On Poems* and *On Music*.[22] Far from decoupling poetry from philosophy, however, the extant fragments of these works of an important Greek poet and philosopher, not surprisingly, bear out the observation that "content," especially as it pertains to ethics, played a central role in

---

19 *Agrestis musa*: *DRN* 5.1398; *silvestris musa*: *DRN* 4.589. On the significance of the Lucretian borrowing, see especially Hardie (2006) 276–278.

20 Among the exceptions are: Alfonsi (1961); Castelli (1966; 1967); and especially Traina (1986) 163–174.

21 See e.g. the commentary of Clausen (*passim*). For a nuanced approach to Vergilian verbal art that takes appropriate account of metapoetics, see Putnam (1970).

22 See Janko (2000); Delattre (2007). With respect to contributions to the history of literary theory in antiquity and the intersection between Epicurean aesthetics and ethics, see the volumes of collected essays in Obbink (1995); Armstrong et al (2004).

the critical evaluation of literature and the arts. As Janko notes apropos of the influence of Philodemus on his Roman pupils: "… [Philodemus'] emphasis on the importance of content, albeit content presented in fine sound, probably encouraged them in the production of polished poetry on grand topics."[23]

The "philosophical turn" I am here seeking to promote in regard to the hermeneutics of Vergilian poetry is inspired by the need to restore a balance to our interpretation of the Eclogues by recuperating (or at least, restoring to center stage) the *ethical dimension* of the dialogues performed under the auspices of the muse, Thalea. If this complementary approach risks being charged with the 18th century "heresy" of seeing poetry primarily as a "vehicle of ideas," it is a danger that I am prepared to confront with the larger aim of persuading a new generation of readers of Vergil's *Eclogues* to acknowledge the porous borders between poetry and philosophy.

The path of investigation I shall be following in these pages is not guided by the prior conviction that Vergil was concerned to champion orthodox Epicurean doctrine in the Eclogues. The nature of his nuanced poetic debt to philosophy is perhaps more aptly characterized by his bosom friend and fellow-poet, Horace, who, although deeply influenced by the same Greek teachers in the Neapolitan circle, nevertheless made it clear that he himself was not a doctrinaire disciple of any particular school ("nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri": "[I have not] sworn allegiance to any master").[24] Vergil, we may plausibly suppose, was equally open-minded in his outlook, and the Aeneid, to look no further, certainly reflects ideas that derive from other prominent philosophical traditions, such as Stoicism and Pythagoreanism. In the case of the Eclogues, however, I shall argue that the central issues of ethics and epistemology that are obliquely raised in the course of the bucolic exchanges are consistently *framed* in Epicurean terms. On this account, Epicureanism in the context of his bucolic verse functions as an aquifer of fundamental ideas that constitute a crucial resource for the exploration of human weakness and vulnerability.

The Eclogue-book annexes conventions that place it squarely within the genre of bucolic verse, and its author frequently makes prominent reference to this defining affiliation. It is nonetheless expedient, in terms of this study, to ask what rhetorical advantage is secured by Vergil's adoption of

---

23 See Janko, (2000) 10.

24 Horace: *Epist.* 1.1.13. For extended discussion of the philosophical substructure of Horatian "Carpe Diem" poetry, see Davis (1991) 145–188 and (2007) *passim*.

what I propose to label the “bucolic scaffolding” of the ten poems that constitute his *opus*.[25] A cursory overview of the scaffolding makes it apparent that the *personae* who engage in conversation-cum-musical performance (and here I include the authorial persona of the monologues) are first and foremost poets/musicians. Their fictional status as “herdsmen” of various stripe (whether goatherds, shepherds, or cowherds) plays second fiddle to their front-stage role as *dramatis personae* who purvey competing ideas of how to pursue a life of happiness in a world ruled by *fortuna*.[26] In light of this perception, I have deliberately employed a dual characterization of the speaking personae as “poets/herdsmen” (with “herdsmen” as the secondary term) so as to register more accurately the relationship between building and scaffolding in the Eclgues. As “poets/herdsmen” their abiding concerns, as may be extrapolated from their dialogues, revolve around issues of elusive *eudaimonia* that preoccupy the Vergilian *musa agrestis*.

From a rhetorical point of view, the bucolic scaffolding is useful in furnishing the embedded poets with a vantage-point on the sylvan periphery, which allows for a stripped-down representation of the human predicament in microcosm. It does not, by any plausible account, erect a space to be conceived as separate from the “real” world—on the contrary, that space is more properly seen as a stage on which to display the psychological complexity of what it means to be a humble mortal in a world subject to external vicissitude.

Perhaps no other preconception has been more lethal to a deeper understanding of the Vergilian inflexion of the genre of bucolic than the flawed notion that the universe of the Eclogues is escapist in its outlook. The origins of this radical distortion of critical perspective that reads the Eclogues as utopian are, by now, increasingly acknowledged.[27] They include the common retrojection of post-Vergilian “pastoral” values and conventions, as these underwent tangential development in later European literature, into

---

25 The concept of “scaffolding” in connection with lyric “argument” is developed more fully in Davis (1991), where see Index under “Scaffolding.”

26 In my judgment, the attempt to make meaningful discriminations, based on aestheticist hierarchical criteria, between the different classes of herdsmen has not yielded persuasive results. On the fundamental hybrid of “herdsman” and “poet” in the Bucolic tradition and earlier poetry, see Sens (2006), pp. 147–166; Gutzwiller (2006) 10–23.

27 Schmidt (1987) ably and critically examines the issue of the extent to which the Bucolic genre throughout its historical development may be viewed as utopian. See especially Ch.1. “Bukolik und Utopie,” 13–22, and Ch.12: “Arkadien: Abendland und Antike,” 239–264.

the far-from-idealized portrayal of the existence of poets/herdsmen in the Eclogues.[28] For classical philologists, in particular, the now widely discredited notion of a Vergilian Arcadia of utopian character owed its longevity in part to an influential article by Bruno Snell;[29] but although we have came a long way from projecting nostalgic yearning for "Arcadia" onto the unblinkered thematic world-view of the Eclogues (an error Vergil implicitly ascribes to Cornelius Gallus in *Ecl.* 10), vestiges of the distortion linger on, albeit sporadically, in the standard commentaries, where one can still encounter the twin (and mutually contradictory) fallacies that the Bucolics are meant to portray the life of actual herdsmen, and that this way of life is primarily represented in Vergil as one of idyllic leisure or some other variation on "le divin loisir." The second chapter of this book, which analyses the interplay of ideas in the programmatic *Ecl.* 1, is partly designed to banish the myth of a utopian pastoral existence once and for all by a rigorous re-examination of the inter-subjective dialogue between the two speakers that reveals the discontents and instability in the life of the poets/herdsmen as constructed in the Eclogues.

At the risk of harping on the obvious, it is a worthwhile preliminary exercise to review in brief outline the main features of the preponderantly "dystopian" picture that emerges from the scripts played out on Vergils's bucolic stage-set.[30]

The opening poem presents a dialogue between a herdsman who is currently experiencing good fortune (Tityrus) and one who has been a recent victim of misfortune (Meliboeus). At the conclusion of their exchange, the fortunate herdsman offers consolation to his despondent interlocutor in the form of an invitation to share a modest meal with him. *Ecl.* 2 is a complaint voiced by a rejected poet/herdsman who eventually succeeds in diagnosing his own pathological condition (erotic *dementia*). The third poem in the series displays a breakdown in the herdsmens' interpersonal relations. In the accurate summary of Guy Lee: "Two shepherds meet and taunt each other with accusations of theft, sexual perversion, malicious damage to property, jealousy and musical incompetence."[31] The fourth eclogue pro-

[28] Halperin (1983) 1–61 argues for a literary-historical differentiation between the terms "Bucolic" and "Pastoral" in view of the (mainly) tangential direction taken by the Renaissance and later traditions of European pastoral poetry.

[29] Snell (1960).

[30] The following précis of Eclogue themes is an abbreviated version of the account provided in my introduction to Krisak (2010) i–xiv.

[31] Lee (1984) 45.

claims the advent of a renewed Golden Age, but its account of cosmic vicissitude draws on a model of ineluctable cyclicality. There is no sharp dividing line between the recycled ages: grim vestiges of the antecedent Iron Age, for instance, overlap with the appearance of the Golden, which in turn is destined to yield to the deterioration of the Silver. The poem that closes the first half of the sequence (*Ecl.* 5) features two eulogies of the mythical founder of bucolic poetry, the figure of Daphnis: the first opens with a lament for his cruel death, while the second offers an account of his subsequent apotheosis as consolation for his catastrophic fall into divine disfavor.

The sixth Eclogue has a programmatic proem that launches the entire second half of the collection. As it unfolds, a poet-philosopher, played by the figure of Silenus, adumbrates a mythographic master-narrative that, for the most part, illustrates the dire consequences of erotic passion. The next Eclogue takes the form of an amoebean singing match between two "Arcadian" master-musicians, Corydon and Thyrsis. The contest is a far cry in tone, however, from the friendly exchange of eulogies to the dead Daphnis performed in *Ecl.* 5. Thyrsis, in particular, often betrays an invidious note in his quatrains, and his much-debated failure in the adjudicated contest is probably to be ascribed to his jaundiced worldview, rather than to a demonstrable inferiority of poetic technique.[32] In the eighth Eclogue we are treated to another variant on the bucolic *agon* in which two rival singers, Damon and Alphesiboeus, vie in portraying their anxiety-ridden erotic experiences.

The penultimate Eclogue explores the issue of the limitations of poetry as consolation for extreme misfortune. Confronted with the brutal confiscation of their lands, Vergil's singers have recourse to the healing function of memory in preserving the poetic community and assuaging their acute sense of collective loss. The tenth and final Eclogue foregrounds the unhappy *amor* of Virgil's close friend and fellow-poet Cornelius Gallus, the founder of the genre of Latin elegiac poetry. In the persona of the poet enslaved to his desire for a capricious mistress, Gallus enters the stage with the forlorn hope ("bucolic daydream") of sharing in the imagined felicity of the Arcadian herdsmen.[33] In the process he comes to the disillusioned

[32] Pöschl (1964) 93–154 compares the two performances with great thoroughness and insight mainly with regard to stylistic/aesthetic criteria, while also remarking on the contrast between the singers in regard to their "attitude towards the world" ("Die Haltung zur Welt").

[33] The phrase "bucolic daydream[ing]" is from the perceptive discussion of 10 in Conte (1986) 113.

realization that the type of immoderate passion that consumes him can only lead inevitably to infelicity.

A leitmotif that is clearly prominent from this cursory review of scripts is the experience of acute loss and dislocation on the part of the bucolic actors. Whether the trauma of dislocation is represented as external (e.g. loss of land in Eclogues 1 and 9) or internal (e.g. erotic loss in Eclogues 2, 8, and 10), the emotional repercussions upon the protagonists are a central concern of Vergil's muse. His poets/herdsmen are represented as engaged in various strategies (explicit and implicit) for achieving felicity in the face of cyclical adversity. The recurrent spectacle of distressed poets/herdsmen struggling to cope with the vagaries of Tyche is framed in philosophical terms that reflect Vergil's intimate familiarity with fundamental ideas transplanted from the Garden.

Since the philosophical approach outlined above may appear, at first glance, to cast a dark penumbra of *gravitas* on the deceptively "light" genre of bucolic verse, a few remarks clarifying my view of the scope of Vergil's muse, Thalea, are appropriate. Horace famously characterized the stylistic level of his friend's less elevated bucolic muse as "molle atque facetum" ("refined and playful"). Though Thalea came to be associated mainly with comedy, it has become a literary-historical truism that the traditional distribution of artistic compartments to the nine Muses was still somewhat fluid in the late Republican period. A generic connection with the comic does not, in any event, preclude the exploration of profound ethical issues, as readers of an Aristophanes or a Molière are keenly aware. As Horace expresses it in a programmatic context in describing his own satiric muse, "what prevents a person from speaking the truth while laughing?" ("ridentem dicere verum/quid vetat?").[34]

Vergilian bucolic poetics manifests a surface levity of tone and flashes of humor (*facetiae*) that sometimes occlude the penetrating observation of human vulnerability being played out in the arena of latent ideas and values. Accordingly, when Vergil's comical satyr-figure of Silenus (who doubles as an Epicurean sage) makes a salacious aside to the beautiful nymph, Aigle, in *Ecl.* 6, we can readily detect, behind the light-hearted badinage, a hint of an attitude to erotic *voluptas* that is antipodal to the mythopoiec account

[34] *Sat.* 1.1.24–25. It is interesting to note that Horace follows this rhetorical question with a passage, clearly modeled on a famous prologic motif in Lucretius, in which he makes an analogy between a poet's delivery of unsavory truths in a light-hearted manner with teachers (*doctores*) who give cookies to pupils as a way of coaxing them to learn their "elementa prima."

of dangerous erotic passion that he adumbrates in the lines to follow. The systematic extrapolation of the "Epicurean substratum" of the Eclogues is a primary goal of this investigation.[35]

[35] The phrase is from Traina (1986) p. 68.

CHAPTER TWO

FRAMING A DIALOGUE ON VICISSITUDE: THE INTERPLAY OF IDEAS IN *ECL.* 1

> To become accustomed therefore to a plain, and not sumptuous, diet gives us health in abundance, and makes us prepared for life's necessary undertakings; [...] and renders us fearless in the face of fortune [*tyche*]
>
> Epicurus: *Ep. Men*[1]

Vergil's inaugural eclogue presents two antipodal (and alternating) views on how to cope with adversity. In the course of six exchanges the poets/herdsmen, Meliboeus and Tityrus, engage in a contrapuntal interplay between competing world-views—an interplay in which the latent issue is the acceptance versus rejection of vicissitude as the master pattern underlying the human experience. By "vicissitude" I include both poles of change (from good fortune to bad and vice versa). The sequence of exchanges culminates in the invitation to a feast, extended by Tityrus to his despondent colleague. The proposed feast provides a consolatory cadence to the ethical interplay, since it exemplifies the philosophical posture represented by Tityrus, and implicitly validates it in preference to the world-view expressed by his interlocutor, Meliboeus. The poem's evolving "argument"—in the form of juxtaposed perspectives on how to respond to acute misfortune—is best extrapolated from a careful analysis of each exchange.

First Exchange: The Present Felicity of Tityrus (1–10)

The initial exchange, comprising five lines each, opens with Meliboeus' mellifluous description of Tityrus' situation:

> *Titure, tu* patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi
> silvestrem tenui Musam meditaris avena;

[1] Arr. 4.131. Translation mine.

nos patriae finis et dulcia linquimus arva,
nos patriam fugimus; *tu, Tityre,* lentus in umbra
formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas.

Tityrus: *you* recline under the canopy of a spacious beech and exercise your woodland craft on a slim pipe, while *we* are leaving behind our fatherland's borders and happy fields; *we* are fleeing our fatherland; while *you, Tityrus,* relaxing in the shade, are teaching the woods to resound with the vocables, "pretty Amaryllis."[2]

Meliboeus frames the antithesis between his own situation and that of his addressee in the starkest of terms, placing the repeated second and first person pronouns (*tu*; *nos*) in metrically salient positions in the hexameter as well as in a doubly chiastic arrangement involving the name, Tityrus (*tu—nos—nos—tu*; and *Tityre, tu—tu Tityre*). This sharply demarcated frame encloses a diptych in which the *felicity* of Tityrus and the *infelicity* of the speaker are trenchantly juxtaposed. The elements of Tityrus' felicity, as Meliboeus enumerates them, constitute a picture of special privilege that is defined, in the first instance, in terms of the leisure to practise the craft of poetry composed in the bucolic genre ("silvestrem … Musam meditaris"). The onomatopoeia, as well as the possible soundplay, on Tityrus' name ("pipe"), help to mark off Tityrus as representative of the renovated bucolic poetry that Vergil inherits principally from Theocritus.[3] It is not, however, this important musical element of Meliboeus' praise that concerns us here, but rather the dialogic context in which the lines are spoken; for the locutions in question are attributed to an *internal* speaker, and therefore possess a focalized dimension that complicates any presumption on the reader's part regarding the viewpoint of Vergil the author. From the strictly dialogical perspective that I shall be maintaining throughout this analysis, it is crucial to bear in mind that Meliboeus's description of Tityrus's situation in life is subjective and, as we shall demonstrate more fully below, excessively hyperbolic when set against the latter's own unembroidered account.

[2] The Latin text of the Eclogues is cited throughout from Mynors' OCT edition (1969). Accompanying English versions are mine. They are meant to complement the interpretations developed here.

[3] The main source for positing an etymological play between "Tityrus" and "reed-pipe" is a gloss in Hesychius. Cp. the scholia to Theocritus *Id.* 3 and Athenaeus: *Deipnosophistae* 182d. See also *EV* under Tityrus; Hunter (2006) p. 264. For alternative, competing ancient etymologies, see Coleman ad loc.; Cairns (1999); Van Sickle (2004). On the literal (synechdochic) and emblematic (Callimachean) connotation of *avena* see Lipka, 154–155. Cairns (op.cit) correctly interprets *avena* as synonymous, in this programmatic context, with the reed-pipe (*calamus*). Note that Tityrus himself identifies his instrument as a *calamus* in line 10.

Meliboeus' effusive portrayal of the privileged existence of his friend focuses on two features: the leisure to compose bucolic verse, and, no less important, the superior quality of the compositions that are the product of this leisure. In the semiotic system of the Eclogues the motif of shade (*umbra*)[4] in preludic contexts signifies the preferred *locus* of poetic composition/performance, and this symbolic "positioning" of the singer is heralded by the opening participial phrase, "patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi" and is reiterated three lines later in the synonymous "lentus in umbra" (where *lentus* repeats the idea of *recubans*, while *in umbra* is shorthand for *patulae sub tegmine fagi*).[5] The idea of Tityrus' superlative accomplishments in bucolic composition is conveyed in a second recurrent motif of the Eclogues: the successful poet is often portrayed as creating reciprocal "resonance" with his natural surroundings.[6] The extravagant claim that the virtuoso Tityrus is teacher to the woods (*doces*) projects onto him a role that may be characterized as one endowed with "Orphean" puissance as well as with special knowledge. The effect of Meliboeus' fulsome portrayal is to elevate the poetic skill of Tityrus to a quasi-vatic status; at the same time, the interloping poet/herdsman who is abandoning the pastoral life sees the latter's egregious poetic skill as combined with enviable success in his love relationship with the "pretty Amaryllis." If we accept an ancillary wordplay on the first two syllables of the name Amaryllis (cp. *amare*: to love), there may be pointed humor in Vergil's etymologizing of the names of lover and beloved (Tityrus, the piper, and his chosen tune, his *amata*,

[4] I shall use the label "*umbra* motif" throughout this investigation to refer to this central recurrent sign. As will be shown later in this chapter, the signification of *umbra* is double and varies with its place of occurrence in the eclogue: in *prologic* contexts it signifies "the ideal *locus* of composition/performance" and is associated with high noon; whereas in *epilogic* contexts it marks the closure of composition and is associated with the setting sun and the *topos* of satiety.

[5] The locution *sub tegmine fagi* is the first of the dense Lucretian allusions that pervade the linguistic environment of the Eclogues. For a succinct account of the occurences of the phrase (along with minor variations) in Latin literature prior to Vergil, see Clausen ad loc., who traces its first extant use to Cicero's translation of Aratus. The Lucretian instances occur at *DRN* 1.988, 2.663 and 5.1016—on which see also Lipka, p. 67.

[6] I employ the term "resonance motif" for this so-called "echo" relationship between poet and bucolic habitat after the key verbs *sonare* and *resonare* that usually, but not invariably, occur in these contexts. I decline to use the terms "echo" and "re-echo," though these are valid denotations of the words, because they fail to capture the less mechanistic model that Vergil develops in the Eclogues. The woods that give back to the composer what they have learnt are not imagined as inanimate receptors of the song, but rather as personified players/singers in their own right. For a different understanding of the "echo" in the Bucolics see Damon (1961).

Amaryllis). In fine, as Meliboeus would have it, Tityrus is blessed both in his extra-poetic (erotic) and his poetic pursuits, and his *eudaimonia*, in this idealized version, appears to be complete. The idealization sounds especially pronounced in view of the fact that Meliboeus' high praise of Tityrus' success is delivered in a somewhat grandiloquent style.

When Tityrus, in his turn, offers his own account of his present felicity, he unequivocally ascribes it to the benefactions of a god (*deus*) who has created the conditions (*haec otia*) favorable to the unfettered exercise of his artistic vocation (6–10):

> O Meliboee, deus nobis haec otia fecit.
> namque erit ille mihi semper deus, illius aram
> saepe tener nostris ab ovilibus imbuet agnus.
> ille meas errare boves, ut cernis, et ipsum
> ludere quae vellem calamo permisit agresti.

> O Meliboeus, a god has created these moments of leisure for my benefit; for that man will always be a god in my sight; an altar to him will always be imbued with the blood of a tender lamb from my sheepfolds. He has granted to my cattle the freedom to wander, as you see, and to me the freedom to play to my heart's desire on the pastoral reed-pipe.

As is manifest both in the ritualistic repetition of *deus* (6;7) and the three-fold repetition of *ille* (*ille … illius … ille*), Tityrus empoys a feature of "hymnal style" in speaking about the deified human benefactor.[7] By way of explanation (*namque*) of his felicity, he affirms his eternal allegiance (*saepe*) to his unnamed numinous protector, and he concludes by specifying the twin nature of his benefaction: security for his cows, who are free to wander, and, of equal significance, his own unimpeded freedom as a poet to compose and perform bucolic verse ("ludere quae vellem"). Since his explanation rests on his firm conviction that his good fortune has been mediated exclusively through divine agency, it follows that he implicitly recognizes its inherently contingent nature. What he is particularly eager to get across to Meliboeus, in response to the latter's eulogistic effusions, is that his *eudaimonia* is totally *dependent* on the goodwill of the *deus* to whom he has become an ardent devotee. To be sure, Tityrus asserts that he is scrupulous in carrying out sacrifices to the god, but perfect devotion does not, by itself, guarantee

---

[7] Clausen ad loc. The triply reiterated third-person pronoun (*ille*) is a marker of what German scholars who pioneered the study of Classical hymnology refer to as the *Er-stil* of hymnal predication (e.g. Norden [1924]). On hymnal style in this passage, see especially Fedeli (1972) 276.

future success, which, in the context of Roman religious culture, always remains a function of the kindly disposition of the relevant *numen*. Tityrus himself makes this fundamental point about the efficacy/inefficacy of cult later in the dialogue, when, in recounting his past infelicity, he comments ruefully on the futility of his earlier prolific ritual sacrifices (33–35):

> *quamvis multa meis exiret victima saeptis*
> pinguis et ingratae premeretur caseus urbi,
> non umquam gravis aere domum mihi dextra redibat.
>
> *Although many fat sacrificial victims left my stalls* and many fat cheeses were pressed for the ungrateful township, my hand never came home laden with money.[8]

Although the text does not explicitly state that Tityrus himself performed ritual sacrifices, but only that *victimae* ("sacrificial victims") frequently left his stalls, it is plausible to assume that he was carrying out sacrifices aimed at improving his parlous circumstances, which in the context include amatory, as well as economic, distress. The conventional interpretation of this passage glosses over the important religious denotation of the term *victima* and focuses instead on the separate, secular, strictly commercial, activity of Tityrus in the local market. However, the poignant circumstance that his frequent sacrifices in the past did not succeed in ensuring him adequate financial gain is a main reason for his fervent gratitude to the new *deus*. In regard to the motif of an *amator* intent on influencing his beloved (in this context the difficult Galatea), there are many passages in the Eclogues that feature poets/herdsmen vowing sacrifices to appropriate divinities (such as Priapus) in order to secure success in their erotic relationships. In any event, Tityrus is at pains to stress that he experienced prolonged frustration and unhappiness while subject to the erotic thralldom of Galatea.

Second Exchange: The Status of Tityrus' Benefactor (*11–25*)

Meliboeus begins the second round of the dialogue with a strenuous disavowal of the emotion of envy (*invidia*):

---

[8] Most commentators conflate the two recurrent events described in the *quamvis* clause, rather than understanding them as portraying separate actions (sacrificial victims leaving the stalls; cheeses pressed for the ungrateful township). Some scholars (following Servius) attach the adjective *pinguis* to *victima*, rather than to *caseus*. On the latter point, I concur with the judgment of Clausen ad line 46: "since *pinguis* is commonly applied to sacrificial animals [...], *multa* and *pinguis* should probably be understood with both nouns: many a fat victim and much fat cheese ..."

> *Non equidem invideo*, miror magis ...
>
> *I do not, for my part, begrudge you at all*, rather I am amazed ...

The very fact of the disavowal suggests that Tityrus might reasonably have gotten the impression, from the hyperbolic tenor of Meliboeus' accolade, that his present felicity was so extravagant as to incite envy in the eye of the beholder. At the same time, the denial of *invidia* links up with a standard *topos* of Greco-Roman encomiastic rhetoric, in which the *laudator*, ever conscious of his credibility, routinely disavows envy (*phthonos* = *invidia*). In short, while distancing himself from any hint of envy, the speaker nonetheless furthers the encomiastic rhetoric on which he has embarked in the opening exchange. In the same vein, his associated expression of amazement (*miror magis*), conforms with another standard eulogistic topos—the "*thauma* motif," which is such a conspicuous feature of the Pindaric encomium. An instantiation of the topos in Theocritus 1.62 may well have provided the intertext for Virgil's phraseology (*koutoi ti phthoneo* = *non equidem invideo*).[9] Meliboeus' *admiratio*, coupled here with the disavowal of *phthonos* (*invidia*), points to the divinely elected situation of Tityrus—in sharp contrast to that of the hapless Meliboeus, who then goes on to draw a perturbing picture of his own dismal fate, marked by dispossession, and disease-ridden, infertile flocks (12–17).

At the end of his account of his wretched plight, Meliboeus calls for an explanation of the nature of Tityrus' mysterious *deus* (18):

> sed tamen *iste deus qui sit*, da, Tityre, nobis
>
> but, my plight aside, tell me, Tityrus, *what is the nature of that god of yours*.

If one construes the relative clause as generic (as my translation reflects), Meliboeus is not here inquiring, as the preponderance of exegetes would have it, as to the *identity* of the divinity ("who is that god of yours"), but rather as to its peculiar *nature* ("what is the nature of that god of yours").[10]

---

9 Note this is a variant reading in the Theocritean MSS (see Gow: App.Crit.). The *topos* is magisterially treated by Bundy (*SP*) (see his Index of Greek Words under *phthonos*). The agency of an unnamed *deus* (Pindar's *theos tis*) is often behind the miraculous event (*thauma*) that captivates the *laudator*. The ethical self-correction of Meliboeus also strikes a chord with the sentiment expressed in *Gnom. Vat.* 53: "One should envy no one. For the good are not worthy of envy, and the more fortune the wicked have, the more they spoil it for themselves." (Tr. Inwood et al. p. 39).

10 The relative *qui* may plausibly be construed as introducing a "generic clause" or "relative clause of characteristic"—a syntax that is paralleled in 2.19, where Corydon complains to Alexis: "despectus tibi sum, nec *qui sim quaeris*, Alexi." The conventional reading of *iste deus*

By this reading, Meliboeus is adverting to what is, at bottom, a theological nuance. Tityrus has intimated that his benefactor is a deified mortal; his interlocutor seeks clarification of this unusual category of divinity.[11]

Tityrus' rejoinder makes perfect sense[12] in terms of an attempt to illuminate his unfamiliar, if presumptively idiosyncratic, cult. To help Meliboeus imagine the unfamiliar, he resorts to comparisons of scale when describing the abode (*sedes*) of his novel divinity. To appreciate the logic of his clarification, it is essential to grasp that he is continuing to rely on the "hymnal style" of discourse that he has earlier been employing. A crucial feature of that discourse is the naming of the *sedes* of the god as a means of "upgrading" his/her status and powers. This strategy, which is endemic to the subgenre of the "cult hymn," entails magnification of the god by citing either the plurality of his cult centers (*sedes*) or their prominence—or both. Tityrus focusses on the grandeur and importance of a unique *sedes*—hence his passionate encomium of the city of Rome (19–25). His glowing description of its unfamiliar scale is carefully designed to help Meliboeus through a series of comparisons that juxtapose small things with large ("parvis componere magna") and culminates in a comparison between disparate plants from the bucolic landscape that are familiar to his hearer (19–25):

> Urbem quam dicunt Romam, Meliboee, putavi
> stultus ego huic nostrae similem, quoi saepe solemus
> pastores ovium teneros depellere fetus.
> sic canibus catulos similes, sic matribus haedos

---

qui sit is to take the clause as an indirect question, with *qui* (normally adjectival) here functioning as *quis* (interrogative pronoun). See Clausen ad loc. For a brief discussion of the pro's and con's of the "generic" reading, see Fedeli (op.cit), note 17, p. 278. A critical consequence of the conventional (mis)reading of the clause is that the response of Tityrus apprears to be oddly evasive.

11 The category was becoming less unusual in the 1st Century BCE, when the Romans were increasingly exposed to the divinization of Hellenistic rulers, on which see Taylor (1931).

12 This reading runs distinctly contrary to the received interpretation of Tiryrus' stance in the dialogue. Coleman's judgment apropos his supposed lack of sympathy may be taken as typical: Tityrus "vaunts his success callously and complacently before his less fortunate friend." (Coleman p. 90). St. Denis (1999) p. 15, speaks of Tityrus' "joie égoiste et sa nonchalante quiétude" ("his egocentric joy and blasé calm"). Boyle (1986) p. 18 speaks even more disparagingly of his "defunct sensibility and cognition." For a revisionist view (which I fully share) regarding Tityrus' capacity for sympathy, see Perkel (2008), 117–118. For the vast majority of critics who repeat the cliché that Tityrus is oblivious to Meliboeus' plight, it is worth observing that it is the latter, in fact, who poses the question that Tityrus sets out to answer. As is also true of the later question posed by Meliboeus at line 26, it is his urgent curiosity, not Tityrus' supposed obliviousness, that is the principal motivating factor for the direction of the dialogue.

noram, sic parvis componere magna solebam.
verum haec tantum alias inter caput extulit urbes
quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.

I foolishly supposed, Meliboeus, that the city they call Rome was like this township of ours, to which we shepherds are accustomed to drive down[13] our tender lambs. So I knew puppies resembled grown dogs, and kids their dams; so I used to compare small things with large. but this city has raised its head aloft as far above other cities as cypress trees usually dwarf pliant shrubs.

The main rhetorical function of Tityrus' series of comparisons of scale (21–25) is to magnify the god indirectly by exalting his *sedes*: the importance and scale of the latter testify to the importance and scale of the former. By way of underscoring the unfamiliar scope of the *sedes*, and, by metonymy, its divinized occupant, Tityrus conspicuously engages in triple repetition of the verb *solere* ("to be accustomed") when describing the familiar bucolic environment (*solemus*:20; *solebam*: 23; *solent*: 25).

Third Exchange: The Past Infelicity of Tityrus (26–35)

It is significant that Meliboeus appears to be quite satisfied by Tityrus' imaginative attempts to substantiate the scale and authenticity of the godhead involved, because he goes on to pose a different, but related, question about his friend's motive for the visit to Rome in the first place. "And what," he asks Tityrus, "was the powerful motive (*causa*) behind your seeing Rome?" ("et quae tanta fuit Romam tibi causa videndi?": 26). In a word, he wishes to know the reason, which he assumes must have been non-trivial (*tanta*), for the journey to the divine *sedes*. The reply of Tityrus is pivotal to the fundamental philosophical issue at stake in the dialogue, since it paints a vivid picture of his own *past* misfortune in diametric contrast to his *present* felicity. A careful unpacking of his narrative of the past experiences that led him to visit the metropolis is a prerequisite for understanding the Eclogue's ethical substructure (27–32).

Libertas, quae *sera* tamen respexit inertem,
candidior postquam tondenti barba cadebat,
respexit tamen et *longo post tempore* venit,
postquam nos Amaryllis habet, Galatea reliquit.
namque (fatebor enim) dum me Galatea tenebat,
nec *spes libertatis* erat nec cura peculi.

[13] With Page, I do not subscribe to the view that the verb *depellere* is here being employed in the technical sense of "to wean."

> *Freedom*, which, though *late in coming*, nevertheless looked favorably upon me in my stagnant existence, after a whiter beard began to fall under the barber's knife, freedom did look favorably upon me and came my way *after a very long time*, after Amaryllis took charge of me and Galatea had left me. For (and I will admit it openly) while Galatea had me in her grip, I had neither *hope for freedom* nor concern for my savings.

With his opening word Tityrus sums up his motive for the journey to Rome in an abstract noun, *Libertas* ("Freedom"), which he places prominently at the very beginning of the verse. Although the word has a precise legal connotation (manumission, or freedom from the condition of slavery), it manifestly acquires, in the context of the exchange, a much wider, polysemic reference. As Clausen has reminded us, *Libertas*, which may be here personified and performs the typically divine action of "looking favorably upon" (*respexit*) the petitioner, was also a political slogan of the party of Octavian, the deified *iuvenis* who is the object of the speaker's new-fangled cult.[14] Apart from these pertinent socio-political references, the lexeme here encompasses other features of Tityrus' present felicity. Chief among the latter are those initially foregrounded by the speaker in his opening exchange, where he informs the amazed Meliboeus about the blessings of his *deus*: freedom for his flocks and freedom for their owner to practise his poetic craft. In this passage, then, *Libertas* may be understood to have multiple senses that include: the legal (regaining possession of one's farm; manumission from servitude); political (adherence to a party ideology); religious (a personified *numen*) and, last but by no means least, the artistic (the leisure to compose bucolic poetry).

Tityrus' autobiographical narrative discriminates between two contrasting periods in his personal fortunes, each defined by the influence of a dominant female lover. The "Amaryllis" period is characterized by felicity, the "Galatea" period, which preceded it, by infelicity. The Amaryllis phase continues into the present, as the differentiating tenses clearly indicate ("postquam nos Amaryllis *habet*, Galatea *reliquit*"). This sharply dichotomized narrative is of signal importance to the interchange of ideas, because it corrects a fundamental misperception that is implicit in Meliboeus' rapturous description. By providing a diachronic account that juxtaposes past infelicity with present felicity, Tityrus endeavors to enlighten his friend concerning the fact that his circumstances are a function of vicissitude. His own

---

[14] Clausen ad loc. Cp. also Fedeli (loc. cit.) 281–282, who supplies a list of parallels for Libertas as a divinity.

acquisition and enjoyment of a multi-faceted *libertas* are revealed to have been of recent origin. Moreover, as he emphasizes at the end of his temporally bifurcated narrative, his release from servitude (both amatory and socio-political in nature) was decidedly independent of his actions, whether these involved frequent sacrifices to the gods or sheer, unrewarded toil.

In addition to emphasizing the futility of his past devotional acts, Tityrus also underscores the fact that his "Galatea" period of infelicity was of excessively long duration ("*longo post tempore* venit": 29). The broader message he seems intent on conveying to Meliboeus is that *external* felicity is not only subject to oscillation, but also radically contingent on forces beyond human control (such as repeated sacrifices to the gods). The deeper question of the possibility of a stable *internal* felicity is not, at this stage in the interplay, a transparent feature of the Tiryran position, but will emerge (as I hope to show) at the close of the poem.

Fourth Exchange: Meliboeus' Incomprehension (*36–45*)

The response of Meliboeus to what I have called the diachronic "correction" on the part of Tityrus is one-sided in its focus and reflects the former's failure to grasp the underlying point about the law of vicissitude governing human affairs. Meliboeus conspicuously ignores the infelicitous "Galatea" period in the life of his friend and fixes his attention exclusively on the happy phase associated with Amaryllis (36–39):

> *Mirabar* quid maesta deos, Amarylli, vocares,
> cui pendere sua patereris in arbore poma;
> Tityrus hinc aberat. ipsae te, Tityre, pinus,
> ipsi te fontes, ipsa haec arbusta vocabant.

> *I used to wonder* why, Amaryllis, you would call mournfully upon the gods, and for whom you would leave apples hanging on their separate trees; so Tityrus was absent! The very pine-trees, Tityrus, the very fountains, the very orchards, would call for you.

Meliboeus's naïve reaction to Tityrus's narrative reveals that his present state of astonishment at the latter's success is continuous with his past attitude (*miror*:11; *mirabar*:36). In his total elision of the "Galatea" phase of infelicity in favor of the "Amaryllis" period, he focuses on Tityrus' success in love (as manifested in Amaryllis' pining for her temporarily absent lover). He also sustains his eulogizing of Tityrus by clinging to the hymnal style of discourse (note the triple repetition of *ipsae, ipsi, ipsa*), and to the ascription to him of Orphean powers, insofar as the personified pines, fountains and

orchards mourn for the absent musician. Meliboeus, in short, fails to grasp the moral of Tityrus' biographical tale, viz. that one's personal fortunes are subject to vicissitude, and that his friend's present *eudaimonia* was preceded by a long period of unhappiness and dire circumstances.

When Tityrus goes on to complete his story he elaborates further on the motives for his pilgrimage to Rome (40–41):

> Quid facerem? neque *servitio me* exire licebat
> nec tam *praesentis* alibi cognoscere *divos*.
>
> What was I to do? I could neither get out of my *servile state* nor come to know *gods present to man* in any other place.

As is commonly recognized, "servile state" here acquires an ambiguous sense, referring both to the metaphorical connotation of "amatory servitude" (*servitium amoris*) and to the literal signification of "the legal status of enslavement." After enduring this protracted double servitude, he came to the realization that his "hope of freedom" (*spes libertatis*: 32) could only be fulfilled by his seeking out a god or gods who might prove to be both accessible and responsive to his needs (*praesentis divos*). At a certain moment of insight he overcomes his former passivity (*inertia*: cp. *inertem*: 27) and sets out for Rome, determined to locate the sympathetic deity to whom he can address his petition in a direct manner. The act of abandonment of a passive victim stance and the concomitant decision to travel to the *sedes* of a potential savior are indices of his basically "proactive" outlook, and his profound belief that his miserable condition is *reversible*, rather than perpetual. Without such an internal re-orientation of perspective, Tityrus would not have created the opportunity to make contact with the *praesens deus* at his Roman *sedes*—an event that he recounts with memorable terseness (42–45):

> hic illum vidi iuvenem, Meliboee, quotannis
> bis senos cui nostra dies altaria fumant.
> hic mihi responsum primus dedit ille petenti:
> 'pascite ut ante boves, pueri; summittite tauros.'
>
> here I saw that youthful god, Meliboeus, in whose honor my altars smoke with sacrifices twelve days every year. Here he was the first to vouchsafe me a response to my petition: "graze your cows as before, boys; yoke your bulls to the plough."

Although the god's injunction is coded in the cryptic style reminiscent of oracular responses, its implied message is that Tityrus, along with others in his community (*pueri*), is now free, by this liberating "speech act," to return to his farm and resume his bucolic vocation. The unstated corollary in the

god's instruction is that his present misfortune will be alleviated and he will experience the *libertas* that he desires. What is omitted from the oblique response, however, is any firm, *explicit* guarantee of sustained ownership. With this citation of the divine *responsum*, Tityrus' narration of his cycle of distress followed by reprieve comes to a close.

The specific form that the piety of Tityrus assumes in this iteration is all of a piece with the Epicurean framing of his eulogy of the unnamed *deus* in lines 6–7. In his prior asseveration of his devotion, which resembles a solemn oath of piety,[15] Tityrus had proclaimed his intention to remain loyal to his divine savior; in the second, he goes on to characterize the *deus* as a *iuvenis*, thereby hinting at an Euhemeristic elevation of a human being to divine status. Even more tellingly, he reports making sacrifices to the novel divinity in terms that transparently mimic the ritual performances that Epicurean disciples regularly performed to preserve the memory of the founder. The specificity of the phrase "twelve days every year" (*quotannis/ bis senos*) recalls the monthly celebrations, accompanied by sacrifices, that the community of the Garden held in honor of Epicurus as stipulated in his famous will.[16] Thus Tityran piety in the context of the programmatic *Ecl.* 1 conforms to the pattern established by the members in honor of their *Divus Epicurus*. The analogy the Eclogue posits between the motivation and character of the ritual sacrifices of Tityrus and those of the Epicurean community constitutes yet another instance of the philosophical cadre undergirding the ideational substructure of Vergilian Bucolic verse.

Fifth Exchange: Meliboeus' Elision of Vicissitude (*46–63*)

Meliboeus' reaction to the culminating episode in Tityrus' narrative is consistent with his earlier predisposition to exclude the unhappy phase of the latter's cycle of vicissitude. To be sure, he plausibly interprets the cryptic *responsum* of the divinized *iuvenis* as favorable to the petitioner, but in his exuberant prognosis of Tityrus' life thereafter he deletes any notion of

---

[15] On the nature and scope of Epicurean piety towards the gods, see especially Obbink (1989, *passim*; 1996, 1–23).

[16] The main primary source for the testamentary stipulations is *DL* 10.16–22, which quotes it verbatim. The will called for ritual commemorative celebrations to the founder on the 20th day of each month, as well as annual observances on the 10th day of the month of Gamelion (see further Arr. 12–16.)

alternating circumstances and proclaims that the latter's good fortune will continue unabated *forever* (cp. *quae semper*: 53). When he apostrophizes Tityrus with the twice-repeated phrase, *fortunate senex* ("blessed old man": 46 and 51), he prominently frames a picture of a future irreversible bliss that, at bottom, reflects his own subliminal fantasies of perfect *eudaimonia*. As Coleman (ad loc.) aptly describes his move: "the repetition introduces a wistful transformation of the humble realities of Tityrus' land into an idyllic landscape …"[17] Meliboeus' "transformation" involves ensconcing Tityrus in what amounts to a perennially stable *locus amoenus*—a transformation all the more jarring in so far as it takes place immediately after he paints an unblinkered picture of the restored land that he concedes to be extremely dismal (46–50):

> *Fortunate senex*, ergo tua rura manebunt
> et tibi magna satis. quamvis lapis omnia nudus
> limosoque palus obducat pascua iunco,
> non insueta gravis temptabunt pabula fetas,
> nec mala vicini pecoris contagia laedent.
>
> *Blessed old man*, these lands will therefore remain yours and adequate to your needs. Although bare rocks cover them all and marsh swallows up your pastures with muddy rushes, no unfamiliar fodder will assail your pregnant ewes, nor will they be afflicted by a harmful contagion from a neighbor's flock.

It is crucial to a proper understanding of Meliboeus' forecast to observe that he leaps to a *subjective inference* regarding Tityrus' *eudaimonia* ("Fortunate senex, *ergo* tua rura manebunt")—an inference based on his own rosy interpretation of the cryptic *responsum*. In diction that is very close to Horace's description of the Golden Age in Epode 16,[18] Meliboeus goes on to assert that Tityrus' flocks will be immune from disease—a first approximation to projecting an idyllic state that soon becomes a full-blown fantasy of total felicity (51–58):

> *fortunate senex*, hic inter flumina nota
> et fontis sacros frigus captabis opacum;
> hinc tibi, *quae semper*, vicino ab limite saepes
> Hyblaeis apibus florem depasta salicti

[17] Coleman ad 51. The subjectivity of Meliboeus' hyperbolic description is also trenchantly expressed by Perkel (2008). p. 119: "He [Meliboeus] projects his own pastoral vision onto the largely mundane circumstances of Tityrus …" Many features of the Meliboean fantasy-projection have parallels in Theocritean passages—on which see Coleman loc cit; Hubbard (2008) 82–88.

[18] See Coleman ad loc.

saepe levi somnum suadebit inire susurro;
hinc alta sub rupe canet frondator at auras,
nec tamen interea raucae, tua cura, palumbes
nec gemere aëria cessabit turtur ab ulmo.

Blessed old man, here among familiar streams and sacred springs you shall often enjoy cool shade; on this side, *as always*, the gentle humming of Hyblaean bees feeding on the willow blossoms on the bordering hedge will often induce you to fall asleep; on that side, beneath the over-hanging rock, the pruner will sing to the breezes; and neither the wood-pigeons, whose cooing you love, nor the turtle-dove will cease to make sweet moan from the lofty elms.

In this naïve projection of an idyllic future existence there appears not the slightest hint of a temporal limit to felicity.[19]

Tityrus' next tune takes the rhetorical form of an *adynaton* in which he strongly reaffirms his unswerving devotion to the young god whose favoring gaze (*vultus*) will never slip away from his memory (59–63):

ante leves ergo pascentur in aethere cervi
et freta destituent nudos in litore piscis
ante pererratis amborum finibus exsul
aut Ararim Parthus bibet aut Germania Tigrim,
quam nostro illius labatur pectore vulgus.

Sooner therefore shall light-footed deer graze in the sky and the gulfs of the sea extrude bare fishes on the shore, sooner, as exiles wandering through each other's borders, shall Parthians drink from the Arar river or Germans from the Tigris, than that god's countenance shall slide from my mind.

Tityrus' counter-assertion is trenchantly marked by the emphatic repetition of the word *ergo* (*therefore*: 59) at the start, which deliberately challenges the opening line of Meliboeus' prior declaration ("*ergo* tua rura manebunt": 46). The marked disparity between the two future scenarios—Meliboeus' fantasy-projection and Tityrus' vow never to forget the god—is particularly salient at the level of world-view. On the one hand, Meliboeus has confidently predicted a life for the "blessed old man" that is ultimately free of vicissitude; on the other, Tityrus juxtaposes a fervent reiteration of his resolve to remain devoted to the favoring countenance of his *deus*. He presumably hopes that he will continue to benefit from his reaffirmed loyalty to the memory of his savior, but he does not venture to predict uninterrupted good fortune for himself. In a nutshell, whereas his interlocutor is all too

[19] On Meliboeus' construction of a *locus amoenus* "with little purchase on reality" see Hunter (2006) p. 265.

ready to assume a stable, unchanging condition of felicity, Tityrus is aware that he can only declare his intention to honor the god's memory and that the rest is beyond his control or purview. At this juncture in the series of exchanges it has become gradually clear that the divergence between the two singers is a function not merely of their material circumstances (fortune vs. misfortune), but also in their basic emotional and philosophical orientations.

Sixth Exchange: Tityrus' Antidote to Vicissitude (*64–83*)

Meliboeus has been the victim of an outrageous act of expropriation: he makes reference to the dispossession of small farmers like himself in the wake of internecine civil discord. In recounting the outrage and its devastating consequences—his loss of his ancestral plot—his pours forth his feelings in a torrent of despair concerning his future lot. He starts with an outright rejection of all hope for an eventual reversal of his dire circumstances (64–66):

> At nos hinc alii sitientis ibimus Afros,
> pars Scythiam et rapidum cretae[20] ueniemus Oaxen
> et penitus toto diuisos orbe Britannos.

> We, however, shall leave this place: some to join the thirsty Africans, some to Scythia, [some] to the chalk-bearing Oaxes river, [some] will reach the Britons, a people far removed from the rest of the globe.

The gloomy scenario that he envisages for himself is permanent exile: he along with other dispossessed will leave their homes and scatter to all extreme corners of the world. His use of the "cardinal points" motif—a globalizing rhetorical convention—indicates that he has entered the realm of extreme hyperbole. He and his companions are imagined, not merely as exiles, but as desperate refugees compelled to seek out the most remote places on the borders of the known world. Vergil's technique of juxtaposing contrasting world-views here achieves a level of formal transparency, for Tityrus had ended his list of *adynata* with the "impossibility" of his ever becoming an exile (*exsul*: 61) of the most extreme kind ("aut Ararim

---

[20] I reject the interpretation (traceable to Servius) of *cretae* as a proper noun. For the philological grounds for the rejection, see Coleman ad loc. The rhetorical grounds are equally compelling: the passage is an example of the common (though often unrecognized) "cardinal points" motif in Latin poetry, in which extreme geographical poles are deployed *as a globalizing device*. In this variant of the motif, the cardinal points are listed in the order: South (*Afros*), North (*Scythiam*), East (*Oaxen*) and West (*Britannos*).

Parthus bibet aut Germania Tigrim"). In announcing his own future travels as an exile, Meliboeus points to precisely the type of geographical extremes that Tityrus has excluded for himself. The disjunction poses the question of whether Meliboeus' exile to a far point of the compass is indeed the only alternative open to him. His enumeration of geographical options is confined to places on the periphery of the Romanized world. An implication of his list of outlandish toponyms is that the "Tityran" option of petitioning the *iuvenis* who sits at the center of the nascent empire is not anywhere on his horizon.

In projecting his vision of unrelieved (and unrelievable) despair, Meliboeus asks a rhetorical question about his grim future, to which he himself immediately supplies a negative (and richly allusive) answer (67–71):

> en umquam patrios *longo post tempore* finis
> pauperis et tuguri congestum caespite culmen,
> post aliquot, mea regna, uidens *mirabor* aristas?
> impius haec tam culta noualia miles habebit,
> barbarus has segetes.

> Alas, shall I ever again, *after a long lapse of time*, look upon my ancestral plot, and the roof of my humble hut piled high with sod? Shall I ever *gaze in wonder* at a few meager ears of grain, my erstwhile kingdom? A reprobate soldier shall own these well-cultivated fallow lands, some foreigner these crops.

A conspicuous repetition in diction—not merely in motif—provides further coherence and emphasis to the contrapuntal exchange, since Meliboeus' rhetorical question actually borrows a phrase that Tityrus had earlier employed to describe his own prolonged period of infelicity (*longo post tempore*: cp. 29 and 67). The thematic relevance of the borrowing bears on the subtext of ideas we have been delineating. Tityrus' prolonged period of misfortune had been followed by a dramatic change for the better; by appropriating Tityrus' exact words Meliboeus highlights his firm conviction that such a reversal is utterly precluded in his case. Meliboeus' use of ironic repetition does not, however, end with the re-use of the Tityran phrase: he also reiterates a key word that he himself has employed at two other points in the dialogue. Twice before he has used the verb *mirari* to describe his sense of awe in contemplating his friend's imagined state of bliss. The threefold iteration is deliberately ordered in such a way as to encompass present, past and, most tellingly, future tenses of the verb (cp. *miror*: 11; *mirabar*: 36; *mirabor*: 69). In the first two instances he expressed amazement at Tityrus' exceptional success in pursuing his poetic *modus vivendi* and enjoying his harmonious love affair with Amaryllis; in the final iteration, he uses the future tense of the same verb (*mirabor*) to underscore his conviction that

he himself cannot hope ever to enjoy such privilege. Vergil's contraposition of philosophical outlooks receives articulation through the repetition, in so far as it gives prominence to Meliboeus' adherence to the fallacy of erasing the other (felicitous) pole in the oscillation of circumstance. In his way of thinking, Tityrus will be eternally happy and he will be eternally unhappy. His insistence on "flattening out" vicissitude directly contradicts the *cyclical model* that we saw embodied in Tityrus' own account of his experiences in which he documents both his unhappy ("Galatea") and happy ("Amaryllis") phases.

Meliboeus's lament over the catastrophic loss of his farmland rises to a bitter crescendo in a denunciation of the civil wars (*discordia*) that have led to his cruel dispossession (71–72):

> en quo discordia ciuis
> produxit miseros: his nos conseuimus agros!

> just see to what extremes discord has brought the citizenry: for the likes of these we have sown our fields!

His outright denunciation then takes an abruptly sardonic twist when he enjoins himself to cultivate his land in a form that echoes the oracular pronouncements (in the imperative) of the unnamed *deus* who had answered the petition of Tityrus (73):

> insere nunc, Meliboee, piros, pone ordine uitis.

> Now graft your pears, Meliboeus, plant your vines in rows!

This verse of Meliboeus quite deliberately caricatures the cryptic injunction delivered by the savior of his compatriot (45):

> pascite ut ante boves, pueri; summittite tauros.

> graze your cows as before, boys; yoke your bulls to the plough.

The formal, syntactical, parallels between the divine *responsum* and the self-apostrophe (both contain double imperatives directing the bucolic occupants to resume their labors of tending flocks, in the one case, and of cultivating orchards and vineyards, on the other) has the desired effect of widening the chasm between felicitous and infelicitous outcomes, so that Meliboeus can assert that his own *eudaimonia* has come to an irrevocable end, with no prospect of recuperation in sight (74–77):

> ite meae, *felix quondam* pecus, ite capellae.
> *non ego uos posthac* uiridi proiectus in antro
> dumosa pendere procul de rupe uidebo;
> *carmina nulla canam*

> go on, my goats; go on, *my once happy herd*! *never again shall I*, laid back in a green grotto, see you from afar hanging from a wooded rock. *I shall sing no more songs*.

What is particularly salient about this totally negative portrayal of his imagined future is the details that resonate with his earlier projection of Tityrus' *otium*; for the participial phrase, "viridi proiectus in antro," ("laid back in a green grotto") mimics the posture of the recumbent poet/herdsman of the opening line, "patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi" ("reclining under the canopy of a spacious beech"). Above all, the future that Meliboeus projects for himself will conspicuously lack the central ingredient of the bucolic existence: the performance of sung verse ("carmina nulla canam"). Thus the prospect of an unproductive life *bereft of poetry* is the culminating point of Meliboeus' outburst against his fate.

The series of bucolic exchanges concludes with a rhetorical cadence in which Tityrus offers consolation to Meliboeus in the form of an invitation to a feast. An adequate understanding of the symbolic function and philosophical underpinning of this gesture of hospitality entails a brief review of the pertinent conventions of consolatory discourse in its philosophical dimension.

The lineaments of a consolatory strategy are transparent in the overall structure of the Eclogue. Consolatory poetics takes extreme loss as its necessary point of departure. As we have seen at some length, *Ecl.* 1. builds its argument on the issue of differential means of coping with adversity. Tityrus' closing invitation to a feast (*vocatio ad cenam*),[21] has the primary rhetorical function of consoling Meliboeus for his acute loss. It is against a "dark background" of despair in the face of extreme misfortune that Tityrus extends his invitation (79–83):

> Hic tamen hanc mecum poteras requiescere noctem
> fronde super viridi: sunt nobis mitia poma,
> castaneae molles et pressi copia lactis,
> et iam summa procul villarum culmina fumant,
> maioresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.

> Here at least you could rest tonight with me on a green couch of leaves: we have ripe apples, soft chestnuts and lots of freshly pressed cheese. Already the rooftops of the farmhouses are smoking, and the shadows that fall from the high mountains are growing longer.

---

[21] The conventional aspect of this motif is extensively analysed in Du Quesnay (1981) 90–97.

Tityrus thoughtfully offers his disconsolate friend the prospect of a modest repast whose ingredients include ripe apples, soft chestnuts and fresh cheese. The details of the menu resonate with Epicurean notions regarding the philosophical benefits of habituallly plain fare. In the *Letter to Menoeceus*—to cite a prominent example—the master succinctly explains the ethical significance of the simple meal:

> οἵ τε λιτοὶ χυλοὶ ἴσην πολυτελεῖ διαίτῃ τὴν ἡδονὴν ἐπιφέρουσιν, ὅταν ἅπαν τὸ ἀλγοῦν κατ' ἔνδειαν ἐξαιρεθῇ, καὶ μᾶζα καὶ ὕδωρ τὴν ἀκροτάτην ἀποδίδωσιν ἡδονήν, ἐπειδὰν ἐνδέων τις αὐτὰ προσενέγκηται. τὸ συνεθίζειν οὖν ἐν ταῖς ἁπλαῖς καὶ οὐ πολυτελέσι διαίταις καὶ ὑγιείας ἐστὶ συμπληρωτικὸν καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἀναγκαίας τοῦ βίου χρήσεις ἄοκνον ποιεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ τοῖς πολυτελέσιν ἐκ διαλειμμάτων προσερχομένοις κρεῖττον ἡμᾶς διατίθησι καὶ πρὸς τὴν τύχην ἀφόβους παρασκευάζει.[22]
>
> for plain sauces, moreover, impart a pleasure equal to that derived from sumptuous habits of diet, if once the pain due to need is removed; and bread and water give the greatest pleasure when one who is in need partakes of them. To become accustomed therefore to a plain, and not sumptuous, diet gives us health in abundance, and makes us prepared for life's necessary undertakings; it also makes us better prepared for the enjoyment of luxuries if indeed from time to time they chance to come our way, *and renders us fearless in the face of fortune.*

Central to Epicurus' teachings on the subject is the therapeutic function of the shared meal as *mental* fortification against the vagaries of fortune (*tyche*) and as a bulwark against fear. In view of Meliboeus' state of extreme agitation over his misfortune, Tityrus' proferred fare has an authentic role to play as an antidote to his interlocutor's emotional, no less than external, dislocation. Meliboeus is being subtly encouraged to distance himself from his plight, at least for the compass of the night, by sharing a modest feast with his friend. As we know from the literature of consolation, from Homer's *Iliad* onwards, the participation in the feast signals a recommitment to life, especially in situations of extreme distress.[23] In the Epicurean literature, in

22 Arr. 130–131. The late Marcello Gigante has discussed the concept of plainness (*litotes*) in opposition to luxuriousness (*polyteleia*) in connection with this passage of the letter (Gigante 1987 113–114).

23 In the magnificent Iliadic episode of the Ransoming of Hector, Achilles famously extends an invitation to to the disconslateTrojan king who has suffered a truly major series of public and private catastrophes.

particular, the topos of the plain meal, along with its latent ethical associations, resurfaces in the treatise on piety (*Peri Eusebeias*) of Philodemus, who, as is well known, was a major representative of the school in the Bay of Naples long with Siro, the presumed philosophical teacher of Vergil.[24]

Does the Epicurean coloration of the coda suggest an elliptical reference to poetic performance? The answer may perhaps be extrapolated from the situation of Tityrus as Meliboeus describes it mellifluously at the commencement of the poem. In the opening salvo of the Eclogue the world of Tityrus is presented, in the eye of the beholder, as a world of unperturbed poetic performance, framed by the *umbra* that is the generative locus of bucolic composition. At the close of the poem, the *umbra* that descends upon the landscape is of a different diachronic order (that brought on by the setting sun versus that provided by shade trees at noon); however, Tityrus represents it, too, as inviting; it draws the players into an intimate and cosy setting. The *otia* that they will both have the opportunity to share in the host's retreat has features that recall the *otia dia* enjoyed by primitive man in Lucretius' sketch in *DRN* 5.1382–1387, where musical performances by herdsmen on the recently invented pan-pipes and flute in a primitive *locus amoenus* are paramount:

> et zephiri, cava per calamorum, sibila primum
> agrestis docuere cavas inflare cicutas.
> inde minutatim dulcis didicere querellas,
> tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum,
> avia per nemora ac silvas saltusque reperta,
> per loca pastorum deserta atque *otia dia.*

> and the whistling of zephyrs through the hollow parts of reeds first taught country folk to blow into hollow hemlock-stalks; then they gradually learned the sweet plaintive tunes that the reed-pipe pours forth, stopped by the musicians' fingers—the reed-pipe invented among the pathless groves and woods and glades, among the lonely haunts of shepherds and *the divine intervals of leisure.*

The two companions will relax in the bucolic niche *fronde super viridi*, and together partake of a simple meal of apples, chestnuts and cheese.[25] We may assume that an important accompaniment to the impromptu evening meal would be the soothing power of song played on the pipe of Tityrus—the

[24] Obbink (1996) 162–163, with commentary ad loc.

[25] This item on the menu is loaded with ethical significance in the context of the plain, but pleasurable meal. In *DL* 10.11 Epicurus is quoted as having declared in a letter, "Send me a little pot of cheese so that I can indulge in extravagance when I wish" (Tr. Inwood et al, p. 4).

tenuis avena of the opening lines. We recall that in the plaintive climax of his last speech Meliboeus had declared his intent to renounce song altogether ("carmina nulla canam": 77). A major consequence of his dislocation, as he sees it, is that he will be *permanently* excluded from the locus of bucolic performance; at Tityrus' behest, he is now (albeit implicitly) being invited to share also in the collateral pleasures of poetic exchange that normally accompany the bucolic feast, however humble.

The Epicurean cadence of the poem, as I have dubbed it, is no sudden tangent to the argument, but is carefully foreshadowed—to borrow Vergil's *umbra* trope—in earlier portions of the Eclogue. A salient early motif that links Tityrus' discourse to traditional Epicurean attitudes resides in his account of the genesis of his devotion to his *deus*. The god to whom Tityrus passionately proclaims his *pietas* is the recently divinized *iuvenis* whose beneficence towards him has made possible his *otium* (6–8):

> O Meliboee, deus nobis haec otia fecit.
> namque erit ille mihi semper deus …
>
> O Meliboeus, it is a god who has who has created this leisure for me. For he shall always be a god for me …

These lines contain an undeniable echo of the Lucretian deification of Epicurus at *DRN* 5.7–8:

> nam si, ut ipsa petit maiestas cognita rerum
> dicendum est, *deus ille fuit, deus*, inclute Memmi
>
> For if we are to speak in accordance with the majesty of the truth that has been revealed to us, then *he was a god, yes a god*, noble Memmius.

Vergil exploits the very same intertextual resonance in *Ecl.* 5.64, in the passage in which Mopsus professes to his companion, Menalcas, his profound admiration for the deified Daphnis: "deus, deus ille, Menalca." Many commentators routinely note the Lucretian echoes in both these passages, but generally do not relate them to a philosophical substratum. In addition to the Epicurean tenor—here mediated by Lucretian diction[26]—we may recall also that Tityrus' prior account of his pilgrimage to Rome and his epiphanic encounter with the *praesens divus*, as well as his affirmation of adherence

[26] It is surely not accidental that Lucretian verbal echoes frame this programmatic eclogue: in the opening line, the phrase *sub tegmine fagi* is a variation on the Lucretian *sub tegmine caeli*, while the words *altis de montibus* in the final line recall *de montibus altis* of *DRN* 4.1020 (see Clausen ad 1 and 83 for complete documentation of both borrowed phrases).

to his cult, are very much in tune with Epicurean views on the subject of divinization of mortal benefactors (see above, p. 28). We shall return to the topic of the apotheosis of human benefactors, both historical and mythical, in our discussion of the figure of Daphnis in *Ecl.* 5.

Finally, the triply repeated emphasis that, as we have seen, the poet places on the *admiratio* ("amazement") of Meliboeus when he perceives the good fortune of Tityrus resonates, contrapuntally, with the widespread doctrine of *athaumastia* ("freedom from surprise"), a version of which was shared by many of the major philosophical schools in the Hellenistic as well as earlier periods. The well-known injunction *nil admirari* ("be surprised at nothing"), with which Horace opens the curtain on his epistle to Numicius (1.6) is conventionally linked by commentators to the key Epicurean precept of *ataraxia*, the tranquility produced by a subject's liberation from fear and perturbation.[27] *Nil admirari* is, of course, the Latin translation of the Greek phrase, *meden thaumasdein*, ("be surprised at nothing"), and it seems highly probable that both the opening of the Horatian epistle and Vergil's triple attribution of pronounced *admiratio* to his Bucolic singer are to be associated with the Epicurean inflection of this central precept. In light of the other conspicuous Lucretian echoes that reverberate in this eclogue, we may plausibly assume that Vergil's carefully orchestrated references to Meliboeus' over-exuberant *admiratio* are primarily attuned to the modulations of Epicurean teaching and are meant to place the poets/herdsmen's attitudes to life in a broader philosophical perspective.

By characterizing the cadence of the poem as "Epicurean" in flavor, I do not mean to imply that the Eclogue seeks to promulgate this particular school of philosophy;[28] rather, that the Tityran world-view illustrates a way of coping with external vicissitude that is congruent with fundamental Epicurean precepts. Vergil's subtle poetic strategy is to juxtapose antithetical modes of responding to catastrophe on the part of the two players in

---

27 See Wickham (1891, vol.2 ad loc.) who cites Strabo 1.3.21 on this topic. Strabo singles out Democritus among other philosophers as employing the doctrinal mantra. I wish to thank Francesco Citti (University of Bologna) for calling my attention to the plausible link between the diction of the Bucolic and the Epicurean precept that heads the Horatian epistle. On the interpretation of the figure of Tityrus as Epicurean sage, see the literature cited in Martini (1986) 300, note 6.

28 It is no secret that in several important respects Epicurean and Stoic philosophical systems share basic ethical precepts. My reason for emphasizing the Epicurean formulations is twofold: (1) Vergil's documented affiliations with transplanted Greek philosophers in the Naples region and (2) his use of Lucretian poetry as a filter for portraying the human pursuit of felicity.

conversation, the older poet/herdsman (*senex*) and his younger interlocutor. To the extent that he intimates the ethical ramifications of their contrasting positions, he deploys a critital lens that exposes the hazards of the Meliboean vantage-point from which the law of vicissitude—alternation between good and bad fortune—is "flattened out." At the same time, it would be an over-statement to make of Tityrus an Epicurean *sapiens* who enjoys god-like *ataraxia*.[29] His pattern of behavior, however, in the face of good and bad fortune (*tyche*), along with its implicit *weltanschauung*, as he himself schematizes it in the course of his exchanges with Meliboeus (e.g. overcoming his *inertia* in hard times, honoring the gods, inviting his disconsolate interlocutor to join him in a plain meal) is wholly consonant with the counsel that Epicurus dispenses to his community in the final segment of the *Letter to Menoeceus*.[30] His proactive approach to his predicament, coupled with his *eusebeia* (devotion to the gods), harmonizes well with Epicurus' counsel to "be armed against fortune [*tyche*]."[31]

The "interplay of ideas" in the programmatic Eclogue of the collection sets the stage for a suite of variations on the theme of differential efforts, on the part of Vergil's *dramatis personae*, to deal, at the emotional and cognitive level, with forces of change beyond their control. If misfortune is seen by one player, Meliboeus. as forever irreversible, Vergil's Tityrus obliquely offers his interlocutor an internal, philosophical, resource as a way of coping with the negative pole of vicissitude.

---

29 In his important overview of Epicurean thought in the Eclogues, Rundin (op.cit) argues that the Tityrus of 1 provides us with a model of the very *ataraxia* that is the central goal of the ethical praxis of the disciples of the Garden.

30 *Ep. Men.* 133–134.

31 The expression, τύχῃ τ' ἀντιτάξεσθαι, is attributed to Epicurus at *DL*.10.120 (= 584 Us.). On the *eusebeia* of Tityrus see the discussion of Clay (1998) 75–102 on the cults of Epicurus.

CHAPTER THREE

FRACTA CACUMINA: THE CONSOLATION OF POETRY AND ITS LIMITATIONS (*ECL.* 9)

> For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
> In the valley of its making ...
>
> W.H. Auden[1]

> Fools are tormented by the memory of past misfortunes; the wise take pleasure in renewing past blessings through grateful recollection.
>
> Cicero[2]

The severe loss at the thematic base of *Ecl.* 9 replicates a motif of the programmatic *Ecl.* 1: land dispossession suffered by poets/herdsmen as a result of confiscations perpetrated by political/military contestants.[3] The physical dislocations caused by the evictions threaten not only to disrupt, but to undermine, the poetic vocation that defines the bucolic community. Whereas *Ecl.* 1 juxtaposes two philosophically different responses to the catastrophe of dislocation, *Ecl.* 9 amplifies the range of those responses by expatiating on its impact on the *locus* and continuity of bucolic performance. For the singers of *Ecl.* 9, the existential issue is the preservation, if not restoration, of poetic activity. Whereas the despondent Meliboeus of the opening Eclogue had reacted with outright renunciation of all future poetic performance ("carmina nulla canam"), while the resourceful Tityrus had contrived to have his bucolic enclave preserved, the paired singers of *Ecl.* 9—the youthful Lycidas and the ageing Moeris—respond to the same

1 From "In Memory of W.B. Yeats."

2 *De Finibus* 1.17.57: "Stulti autem malorum memoria torquenter; sapientes bona praeterita grata recordatione renovata delectant." The speaker of these lines is Torquatus, who acts throughout the dialogue as a spokesman for Epicurean values.

3 On the old chestnut of pseudo-autobiographical events relating to the land confiscations as reflected in the dispossession motifs in 1 and 9, see the sobering remarks of Clausen, p. 30, note 4, and Coleman, p. 274.

disruptive event by resorting to the consolation of poetic memory. In the latter case, what the poets have lost in terms of the physical environment (symbolized in *fracta cacumina*: "fractured beeches") they attempt to recuperate through the agency of song-exchanges that are partial recollections of earlier compositions in the bucolic repertoire. *Ecl.* 9 poignantly explores the limits and efficacy of this consolatory agenda.

In the programmatic *Ecl.* 1, the unfortunate younger poet had set the scene with a fulsome depiction of the place in which his happy interlocutor was ensconced.[4] In the later poem, by contrast, Vergil reverses the dramaturgical vantage-point and presents an older figure, Moeris, who depicts a disturbed bucolic landscape (1–6):

> Quo te, Moeri, pedes? an, quo uia ducit, in urbem?
> O Lycida, uiui peruenimus, aduena nostri
> (quod nunquam ueriti sumus) ut possessor agelli
> diceret: 'haec mea sunt; ueteres migrate coloni.'
> nunc uicti, tristes, quoniam Fors omnia *uersat*,
> hos illi (quod nec *uertat* bene!) mittimus haedos.[5]

> Where are you off to, Moeris? Are you following the road to town? O Lycidas, we have lived to rue a day we never feared would come to pass: a stranger who has taken possession of our small plot would declare: "This belongs to me; out with you, old tenants!" Now we, the losers, wretched, (since Fortune *overturns* all) are handing over these kids—and may things *turn out* badly—for him!

In Moeris' bitter account of his brutal expulsion and loss of property it is particularly salient that he reaches for a gnomic statement (*sententia*) in order to come to terms, philosophically, with the phenomenon of vicissitude: "quoniam Fors omnia *uersat*" ("since Fortune overturns all").[6] The word he employs for the general turn of fortune (*versare*) is the frequentative form of the verb (implying repeated occurrence), and indicates that Moeris recognizes the inherent cyclicality of fortune (*Fors*). This insight on his part becomes more transparent in the line immediately following the gnome, in which he expresses the wish that the new owner will fare badly in his turn: "quod non *vertat* bene" ("and may things *turn out* badly"). The wordplay *versat/vertat* wittily draws attention to the older man's awareness of

---

[4] The past tenses I employ here do not refer to putative dates of composition of the two Eclogues, but rather to the order of the poems in the Eclogue-book.

[5] I here depart slightly from the OCT in capitalizing the words *fors*.

[6] There may be an Epicurean color in the formulation, according to Martini (1986) 320–321: "L'espressione [...] e la semplificazione e la riduzione a livello popolare di un concetto filosofico epicureo" ("The expression is the simplification and reduction to a popular level of an Epicurean philosophical concept").

the *reversibility* of fortune, not only his own, but also that of the new owner who has just usurped his farm. In complaining of his own present reversal he employs vivid assonance, coupled with alliteration, to underscore the change from good fortune to bad that has occurred within his long life-span: "*uiui* per*ue*nimus, ad*ue*na nostri …" The sentiment expressed in his outburst is akin to that of the ancient Greek proverb (occasionally pronounced by tragic choruses): "never call a man fortunate until he is dead." Old Moeris' response to his present dislocation may be clearly differentiated from that of his counterpart Meliboeus in *Ecl.*I: he is deeply upset over his unjust fate, but at the same time he shows himself capable of taking the long view with regard to the ineluctable rotation of fortune.

As the conversation proceeds, we learn more about the scope of the dislocation and its broader implications, as Lycidas responds to the older man's initial report of his eviction (7–10):-

> Certe equidem audieram, qua se subducere colles
> incipiunt mollique iugum demittere cliuo,
> usque ad aquam et ueteres, iam fracta cacumina, fagos,
> omnia carminibus uestrum seruasse Menalcan.

> I, at least, had heard that, from where the hills begin to rise upward, and then lower their ridge in a gentle slope, right down to the water and the old beech-trees (with their tops now fractured), your Menalcas had saved the entire area by means of his poetry.

The space circumscribed by Lycidas is by no means to be comprehended in merely geographical terms. The elements of its topography—a highland valley bordered by gently declining slopes encompassing a water source and beech-trees—define a poetic space, a *locus amoenus* that constitutes the site of bucolic composition and (re)performance. The "literary beeches"[7] have "fractured tops" (*fracta cacumina*), which function as a graphic signpost for the loss of the creative *umbra* (*shade*) that its leafy canopy has hitherto provided. The iconic space of bucolic song—the *sub tegmine fagi* evoked in the first line of the Eclogue-book—has lost its welcoming cover (*tegmen; cacumen*) and the resident poets of the district have been, at least partially, dislodged.

It is against this stark backdrop of literary, no less than physical, deprivation that Lycidas enunciates the rumor: "I, at least, had heard that […] your Menalcas had saved the entire area by means of his poetry." The rumor carries the implication that poetry has magical efficacy (for, as is well known,

[7] Clausen, p. 267.

carmen can also connote a magical incantation) and is therefore capable of transforming the external world. Even more to the point, poetry is assumed to have the power to *reverse* the shattering misfortune of a general dislocation.[8] In relating the rumor in an albeit guarded manner, Lycidas discloses a certain youthful naiveté, as well as a basic gullibility regarding the ways of the world. Moeris immediately disabuses his friend of the notion that the fanciful rumor may reflect the actual situation (11–13):

> Audieras, et fama fuit; sed carmina tantum
> nostra ualent, Lycida, tela inter Martia quantum
> Chaonias dicunt aquila ueniente columbas.

> So you heard and so the rumor went. But our poems avail among the weapons of war, Lycidas, as much, they say, as Chaonian doves do at the approach of an eagle.

Once again Moeris' penchant for thoughtful reflection leads him to frame his response in universalizing terms that, similar to his earlier remark concerning the role of vicissitude in human affairs (*Fors omnia versat*), approach gnomic force. The proverbial cast in his generalization about poetry and war (underscored by the phrase, "they say") enlarges the scope of his observation that, as a potential instrument of power, poetry is no match for military weapons. The blatant asymmetry between art and martial violence in respect to power relations is encapsulated by Moeris in a vivid comparison: peaceful doves versus belligerent eagle (with *aquila* flagging a reference to the eagle standards borne by Roman legions). Moeris goes on to illustrate his generalizing adage with a frighteningly concrete account of his own perilous situation: both he and Menalcas had rashly engaged in an altercation with their soldier/usurper that might have cost them their lives, had they had not prudently cut it short (14–16):

> quod nisi me quacumque nouas incidere lites
> ante sinistra caua monuisset ab ilice cornix,
> nec tuus hic Moeris nec uiueret ipse Menalcas.

> If a raven on the left had not warned me from its oak-tree hollow to cut short these new disputes by any means whatever, neither your Moeris here nor Menalcas himself would be alive today.

Moeris' discursive role at this juncture in the interchange is not dissimilar to that ascribed to Tityrus in *Ecl.* 1, inasmuch as he deflates the fantasy of his adolescent interlocutor and *corrects* the latter's double misperception

[8] I share the assumption with Page ad line 10 that the region described is not limited to a single property, but "all the district lying between the points mentioned."

(both the illusion regarding the power of poetry to change the world, and the misinformation about the true outcome of the quarrel between the dispossessed poets/herdsmen and the discharged veteran, on the other). Menalcas' clarification of the true nature and gravity of the threat posed by the confiscations has obliged Lycidas to come to terms with the vast extent of the loss inflicted on the bucolic community. Now that he has been fully apprised of the depth of the catastrophe, he focuses with fervor and alarm on its baneful repercussions on the poets' very *modus vivendi* (17–20):

> Heu, cadit in quemquam tantum scelus? heu, tua nobis
> paene simul tecum *solacia rapta*, Menalca!
> quis caneret Nymphas? quis humum florentibus herbis
> spargeret aut uiridi fontis induceret umbra?

> Alas, can such evil possess any man? Alas, was the *solace of your poems* nearly snatched away from us along with you, Menalcas? Who would sing of the nymphs? Who would strew the ground with flowering herbs or cover the fountains with green shade?

Lycidas' emotionally fraught apostrophe to the absent Menalcas is based on the underlying idea of poetry as providing consolation (*solacia*) for extreme loss. In this respect, poetry is conceived as appropriating the function of ritual, and Menalcas is therefore imagined as performing efficacious speech acts (strewing the ground with leafage and covering the fountains with shade). That these symbolic verbal actions are meant to evoke a funereal context is clear from the similarity in diction to the song of Mopsus at *Ecl.* 5.40, which enjoins identical rites as consolation for the demise of Daphnis:

> spargite humum foliis, inducite fontibus umbras

> strew the ground with leaves; cover the fountains with shade.

Though a signature poem from Menalcas' repertoire is elliptically represented ("quis caneret nymphas?"), it may plausibly be assumed to have centered on the conventional motif of the nymphs mourning the death of Daphnis in notes analogous to the lament of Mopsus. The intratextual references to artificially induced shade (*umbra*) corroborates the notion of the therapeutic valence of the poetic imagination. If, in the words of Auden cited as an epigraph to this chapter, "Poetry makes nothing happen," it can nonetheless offer consolation to the deprived "in the valley of its making," which, unlike the highland valley under threat of destruction, is an artificial realm of the spirit beyond the deleterious reach of war.

With the infectious exuberance of youth, Lycidas at once begins to implement a strategy of consolation that consists in recollection and re-performance of snatches of bucolic *carmina* composed by the master-singer, Menalcas. He proposes that he and Moeris engage in a joint effort to recall excerpts of Menalcan poetry. Before offering an analysis of this gambit which Gian Biagio Conte has ably discussed in general terms under the rubric of "poetic memory,"[9] it is important to examine the series of paired citations of Menalcan compositions from the vantage-point of their contrasted thematic orientations, for the program of citations exfoliates to embrace themes, that, on the surface, appear to lack a direct connection with the discourse of consolation. The sequence of cited verses takes the form of an amoebean exchange, which, as it will emerge, Moeris is incapable of sustaining.

The fourfold citations are embedded in two exchanges between the singers that are contrapuntally framed in their motif structure. For convenience of exposition we will refer to these exchanges as A1, A2 and B1, B2. The usefulness of this labeling will become clear when we lay bare the symmetrical configuration of the thematic choices made by each singer. A brief analysis of the opening round as initiated by Lycidas will set the stage for charting the direction of the dialogue from this point forward. He begins the series by reciting a 3-line specimen of a poem by Menalcas (A1) that he claims to have surreptitiously memorized (21–25):

> uel quae sublegi tacitus tibi carmina nuper,
> cum te ad delicias ferres Amaryllida nostras?
> 'Tityre, dum redeo (breuis est uia), pasce capellas,
> et potum pastas age, Tityre, et inter agendum
> occursare capro (cornu ferit ille) caueto.'

> Or the song I secretly overheard you singing when you were on your way to serenade our favorite Amaryllis? "Tityrus, until I return (the journey's short) feed the goats, and drive them, fed, to water, and as you drive take care not to run against the he-goat—he butts."

In his rejoinder (A2) Moeris explicitly rejects the thematic choice made by Lycidas and puts forward his own 3-line extract that he claims retains the original status of a draft (26–29):

> Immo haec, quae Varo necdum perfecta canebat:
> 'Vare, tuum nomen, superet modo Mantua nobis,

[9] Conte (1986).

> Mantua uae miserae nimium uicina Cremonae,
> cantantes sublime ferent ad sidera cycni.'

> Or rather this one, which he sang for Varus, though it lacked the finishing touch: 'Varus, your name (provided only that Mantua be left to us—Mantua too close, alas, to wretched Cremona) will be borne aloft to the stars by singing swans.'

With the adversative *immo* ("or rather") preceding his own selection (*haec*), Moeris indicates at the outset that he prefers a different path (thematic and generic) than that initially laid down by his sympathizer; for Lycidas has quoted a passage of Menalcan verse in which the speaker is a lover setting out on a serenading visit to his beloved and who is giving instructions to a fellow herdsman, "Tityrus," on how to take proper care of his flock during his absence. In short, the generic context of the quoted verse is amatory: the departing *amator* is off to pay suit to his "Amaryllis"—a stock name in the bucolic community for the female *amata*.[10] Scholars have pointed out that the excerpt amounts to a virtual translation of a passage of Theocritus *Id.* 3. Juxtaposition of the Greek original and the Vergilian quotation will make the nature of the close imitation evident:

> Τίτυρ', ἐμὶν τὸ καλὸν πεφιλημένε, βόσκε τὰς αἶγας,
> καὶ ποτὶ τὰν κράναν ἄγε, Τίτυρε· καὶ τὸν ἐνόρχαν,
> τὸν Λιβυκὸν κνάκωνα, φυλάσσεο μή τυ κορύψῃ.

> Tityrus, my good friend, do me a favor: feed the goats and drive them to the spring, Tityrus. And be careful that the billy-goat, the tawny Libyan, doesn't butt you. (*Id.* 3.3–5)

> Tityre, dum redeo (breuis est uia), pasce capellas,
> et potum pastas age, Tityre, et inter agendum
> occursare capro (cornu ferit ille) caueto.

> Tityrus, till I get back (it's a short trip), feed the goats and drive them, when fed, to the water, Tityrus; and as you drive, be careful not to run against the billy-goat—he butts. (23–25)

The poetic choice of Lycidas, then, reveals two salient programmatic aspects: amatory theme and close adherence to the Theocritean model. In deliberate contrast, Moeris recalls a specimen of bucolic that we may label

10 See Lipka, 177–178, who also connects the name, in some contexts, with the verb, *amare*. Another etymological wordplay would connect it with a Greek verb meaning "to sparkle." The two are by no means incompatible. The serenade context is clearly stated in Theocr. 3.1: Κωμάσδω ποτὶ τὰν Ἀμαρυλλίδα ("I'm off to serenade Amaryllis").

"Vergilian," in so far as it reflects the speaker's engagement with the contemporary events surrounding the land confiscations. From a generic point of view, Moeris diverges even further from the Lycidan opening excerpt by electing to cite an encomium in the form of a self-fulfilling promise (27–29):

> Vare, tuum nomen, superet modo Mantua nobis,
> Mantua uae miserae nimium uicina Cremonae,
> cantantes sublime ferent ad sidera cycni.
>
> Varus, your name (if only Mantua survives for us; Mantua, alas, too close to unfortunate Cremona!) shall be exalted to the stars on high by singing swans.

Moeris' contribution also points in a direction that has metapoetic implications for the Vergilian scope of "Menalcan" bucolic. Within the codified order of literary styles that functioned as a frame of reference for the Augustan poets, the trope of "singing swans" (*cantantes cycni*) signifies a pronounced elevation of poetic manner. The encomiastic fragment excerpted by Moeris recalls/imitates the elasticity of Vergilian bucolic in respect to tone, manner and diction, for as Vergil makes explicit in the proem to *Ecl.* 4, an important dimension of his ongoing transformation of the genre is to experiment on occasion in a higher stylistic register and thereby to expand the boundaries of bucolic poetry ("si canimus silvas, silvae sint consule dignae": "If we sing of woods, let those woods be worthy of a consul").[11] Thus the pathway to "poetic memory," as proposed in the opening round of citations, is clearly bifurcated. Moeris has joined in the game of recollection and reperformance introduced into the dialogue by Lycidas, but he signals at the outset his own preference for the path of generic renovation that leads beyond slavish Theocritean imitation. At the same time, Moeris' first choice of theme is manifestly better suited to the exigencies of a consolatory program in the here and now, and which holds out the hope of a reversal of infelicity for the dispossessed poets/herdsmen, whereas Lycidas' Theocritean imitation points in the direction of a retreat into mere nostalgic remembrance.

The second installation of the paired Menalcan citations (B1 and B2) is separated from the first by an interlude in which Lycidas modestly sets forth his own credentials as a poet. In doing so, he very self-consciously reveals that he is willing to surrender the programmatic lead to his older colleague (30–36):

[11] 4. 3. Cp. the opening line of the same eclogue: "Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus" ("Sicilian Muses, let us sing in a somewhat more lofty strain."). We may compare the proem of 6, a poem that, like the Menalcan quotation, also contains an encomium of Varus that goes on to ascribe a vatic voice to the embedded singer, Silenus.

Sic tua Cyrneas fugiant examina taxos,
sic cytiso pastae distendant ubera uaccae,
incipe, si quid habes. et me fecere poetam
Pierides, sunt et mihi carmina, me quoque dicunt
uatem pastores; sed non ego credulus illis.
nam neque adhuc Vario uideor nec dicere Cinna
digna, sed argutos inter strepere anser olores

As you would wish your swarm of bees to avoid Cyrnean yews and the udders of your clover-fed cows to swell up, do lead the way with a song from your repertoire. The Pierian Muses have made a poet of me also; I too have songs to my credit; me also the shepherds call "bard," but I demur at taking them at their word. For I do not yet see my art as comparable that of Varius or Cinna, but rather I cackle like a goose among high-pitched swans.

The "high-pitched swans" metaphor is obviously intended to resonate with the "singing swans" of Moeris' promised eulogy of Varus and, like the invitation to "lead the way" (*incipe*), manifests deference on the part of the younger poet towards his superiors (a circle of contemporary poets that included Vergil's close friend, L. Varius Rufus, and Helvius Cinna).[12] The interlude allows Lycidas not only to declare his artistic credentials in anticipation of the renewed exchanges of memory to follow, but also to signal his inclination to follow the direction indicated by Moeris. The diction and the motifs he employs throughout the interlude are closely modeled, *mutatis mutandis*, on a passage in Theocritus (*Id.*7. 37–41). Both the model and the imitation employ the rhetorical stratagem of the generic disavowal (*recusatio*), which has the effect of accentuating the *choice of song* in regard to theme, no less than style.

In the sequel, however, the initial song fragment (B1) in the second round of citations presents us with an inversion of expectation that is a perfect illustration of Vergilian wit (*facetiae*): Moeris accepts the polite invitation to lead off the post-interlude exchange, but instead of following the thematic path that he himself had laid down previously (the Varus encomium) he chooses to do a rendition in Theocritean mode, which, like the opening gambit of Lycidas, adapts a highly conventional motif of bucolic: the love-sick Cyclops, Polyphemus, serenading the sea-nymph, Galatea (37–43):

Id quidem ago et tacitus, Lycida, mecum ipse uoluto,
si ualeam meminisse; neque est ignobile carmen.
'huc ades, o Galatea; quis est nam ludus in undis?

12 On these poets see especially Clausen ad line 35.

hic uer purpureum, uarios hic flumina circum
fundit humus flores, hic candida populus antro
imminet et lentae texunt umbracula uites.
huc ades; insani feriant sine litora fluctus.'

I am working on it, Lycidas, and turning it around in my head—if only I can bring it back to memory—since it's a song of no mean stature. "Come to my side, O Galatea; what fun can there be in sea-waves? Here spring is in glorious color; here by the river-banks the earth puts forth flowers of dappled hue; here white poplar trees hang over the cave, and supple vines weave shady coverings. Come to my side and let the mad waves batter the shoreline."

The distribution of the citations in terms of chosen themes is consistent in the alternation between modalities of bucolic composition: "Theocritean" (A1), "Vergilian" (A2), and "Theocritean" (B1). What is deviant, however, in respect to B1 (the Cyclops' suit) is the subtle exchange of poetic roles that has taken place: the fact that Moeris has now elected to recall, with great labor, a segment of Menalcan poetry that emulates a Theocritean motif—a move he had previously rejected in favor of a Vergilian focus on the contemporary pastoral predicament.[13] There is perhaps an element of cunning in his rhetorical shift, however, since the "allusive art" displayed in B1 demonstrably goes beyond virtual translation of a Theocritus passage (as was the case in A1) to create a freer adaptation of the original.[14]

The reversal of roles discernible in Moeris' selection (B1) is sustained, though to an even more pronounced degree, in the recitation of Lycidas (B2). In this final act of poetic remembrance, young Lycidas actually appropriates the earlier stated preference of Moeris for a thematic focus on the topical issue of the prosperity of the bucolic environment (46–50):

Daphni, quid antiquos signorum suspicis ortus?
ecce Dionaei processit Caesaris astrum,
astrum quo segetes gauderent frugibus et quo
duceret apricis in collibus uua colorem.
insere, Daphni, piros: carpent tua poma nepotes.

---

13 The role reversal is astutely noted by Clausen ad lines 39–50, who uses the labels "Theocritean" and "Roman" to designate the disparate thematic choices. In regard to the vexed textual question of the proper assignment of lines to each singer, I follow Clausen and Mynors in retaining the *symmetrical ordering* of the Menalcan quotations as transmitted in the Mediceus and Palatinus mss.

14 In regard to this aspect of allusion, see Conte (1986). Cp. also the remark of Coleman ad line 39: "The passage is adapted from Th. *Id.* 42–47 [...]. The descriptive detail, however, is Vergil's own."

> Daphnis, why are you gazing at the old risings of the signs? Look: the star of Dionean Caesar has gone forth, the star by whose influence the fields rejoice in their fruit and the grape-clusters take on their color on the sunny hillsides. Graft your pears, Daphnis: the grandchildren will pick your fruit.

What is conspicuously annexed here is the grand motif of the deified bucolic benefactor—a motif we will analyse more amply below (Ch.5) in connection with the pair of encomia of the same *laudandus* in *Ecl.* 5. In the narrative context of *Ecl.* 9, Daphnis has not yet himself reached the exalted status of deified benefactor, rather he stands for the "archetypal bucolic figure" still situated on the earth, and who is being urged to observe the celestial omen of the *Caesaris astrum*—the new constellation crossing the sky, which was widely believed by the Roman populace to be the divinized embodiment of the assassinated Julius Caesar.[15] The influence of the new constellation is conceived as general and recurrent, as the syntax of the passage makes clear. It is harbinger of *rejoicing* fields ("quo segetes *gauderent* frugibus"), a personification that is synechdoche for overall felicity in the bucolic/agrarian heartland. The last line of the cited verse establishes an affiliation between the unnamed divine benefactor of *Ecl.* 1 and the proclaimed benefactor of *Ecl.* 9: the divinized Julius Caesar in the latter case, and his destined-to-be-divinized adoptive son, Octavian ("*Divi Filius*") in the former. The affiliation is emphasized by the intratextual echo in the injunction to "graft your pears" ("insere, Daphni, piros"), which borrows the form of the quasi-oracular response of the *deus* as delivered to Tityrus in *Ecl.* 1 ("pascite, ut ante, boves"), and which was also ironically mimicked by a sarcastic Meliboeus later in the poem ("insere nunc, Meliboee, piros").

Lycidas' annexed motif highlighting the appearance and significance of the *Caesaris astrum* carries important ramifications for the discourse of poetic consolation that is the prime subtext of *Ecl.* 9; for the catasterism of Julius Caesar holds out hope for a change from infelicity to felicity (*gaudium*) in the world of the poets/herdsmen. To be precise, Lycidas' second selection (B2) anticipates a favorable outcome in the seasonal oscillation of vicissitude, in so far as the prediction that "the grandchildren will pick your fruit" points unequivocally to a future *eudaimonia.* Thus the reversed order of performers, combined with the chiastic interchange of

[15] From the abundant literature on the *sidus Iulium*, see especially Taylor (1931); Weinstock (1971).

roles (Lycidas [A1], Moeris [A2]; Moeris [B1], Lycidas [B2]), has served to underscore the optimistic direction of the culminating embedded song-fragment.

In the context of the optimum means of coping with adversity, memory (*mneme*) played a cardinal role in contemporary ethical thought, no more prominently so than in the consolatory discourse emanating from the Garden.[16] On the basis of multiple sources, direct and indirect (including fragments of letters written by the founder to console members of the Epicurean faithful who had lost close relatives to death), we are able to document a consistent position of the school on the crucial function of memory in alleviating distress and restoring equanimity. The fundamental operative idea is the recourse to *recollection* of philosophical conversation—the very activity of philosophizing with colleagues—as a source of pleasure that annuls both bodily pain and mental turbulence. Thus when Epicurus himself was on the verge of dying, he wrote a famous letter to one of his favorite disciples, Idomeneus, registering the extreme pleasure he derived from recalling moments of shared philosophizing:

> I write this to you while experiencing a blessedly happy day, and at the same time the last day of my life. Urinary blockages and dysenteric discomforts afflict me which could not be surpassed for their intensity. But against all these things are ranged the joy in my soul produced *by the recollection of the discussions we have had*[17]

As we shall see below (Ch.5) in our discussion of *Ecl.* 5, the singer there named "Menalcas" choses, in contradistinction to his colleague, Mopsus, to focus on the blessings of Daphnis when it is his turn to compose a eulogistic poem on the subject of the death of the bucolic icon. It is no exaggeration to state that, for those of Epicurean persuasion, the memory of past felicity is absolutely crucial to the attainment of present tranquility. This central notion is succinctly formulated in a text that we owe to the testimony of Plutarch:[18]

> ὥσπερ λέγουσι, τὸ μεμνῆσθαι τῶν προ-
> τέρων ἀγαθῶν μέγιστόν ἐστι πρὸς τὸ ἡδέως ζῆν
>
> As they [sc. Epicureans] say, remembering previous goods is the most important factor contributing to a pleasant life.

[16] On the social dynamics of the Epicurean community of the Garden, see especially Clay (2009).

[17] "ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν γεγονότων ἡμῖν διαλογισμῶν μνήμῃ". The source of the Greek text is *DL* 10.22 (Arr. 52). The English translation is from Inwood et al. p. 79.

[18] *A Pleasant Life* 1099d (= Us. 436). The English translation is from Inwood et al. p. 101.

The importance that the Epicureans assigned to the recollection of past pleasures as a means of coping with distressful thoughts in the present is also well adumbrated by Cicero in a passage in the Tusculans in which he outlines the strategies of various philosophical schools for dealing with life's vicissitudes (*casus et eventus*):[19]

> vetat igitur ratio intueri molestias, abstrahit
> ab acerbis cogitationibus, hebetem aciem ad
> miserias contemplandas facit; [...] inpellit rursum
> et incitat ad conspiciendas totaque mente
> contrectandas varias voluptates, quibus ille
> et praeteritarum memoria et spe consequentium
> sapientis vitam refertam putat.

> reason therefore [sc. in the opinion of Epicurus] interdicts the mind from focusing on troubles, draws it away from distressful thoughts, dulls its keenness for concentrating on infelicity, continually drives and encourages it to contemplate with full intensity a range of pleasures, with which he regards the life of the philosopher to be packed, both through the recollection of the past and expectation of the future.

The pertinent object of recollection for the bucolic community of Vergil's *Eclogues* is *shared poetic performance*, which corresponds to the philosophical conversations of blessed memory that provided consolation for the dying Epicurus.

In introducing the brief series of poetic reminiscences in *Ecl.* 9, Lycidas had explicitly designated the memorable poetic compositions of Menalcas as vectors of consolation (*solacia*). By the same token, the very *activity* of shared recollections as subsequently practiced by the two poets-herdsmen is also intended to offer *solacia* for the threatened loss of Menalcas. It is especially significant that *solacia*, in this context, denotes a *general* characteristic of Menalcan verse and, by extension, one that is representative of bucolic poetry. Thus the re-performance of Menalcan *solacia* itself guarantees—indeed recreates through repetition—the consolatory function of recited poetry.

In principle, then, shared poetic reminiscences hold out the hope of an effective therapy for the stress occasioned by the misfortune of dislocation. What emerges as the dialogue progresses, however, is a creeping concern on the part of the more experienced Moeris with the empirical (as opposed to theoretical) limitations of recollected verse. For the elder poet complicates,

19 Cicero: *Tusc.* 3.15. 33.

if not obliquely challenges, the assumption of the efficacy of the proposed therapy by dramatizing his own failure of memory due to his advanced age (51–55):

> Omnia fert aetas, animum quoque. saepe ego longos
> cantando puerum memini me condere soles.
> nunc oblita mihi tot carmina, uox quoque Moerim
> iam fugit ipsa: lupi Moerim uidere priores.
> sed tamen ista satis referet tibi saepe Menalcas.

> Age takes all away, the mind included. I recall how often in my youth I would put the long days to rest by my singing. Now I have forgotten so many songs! The voice is also failing Moeris now. The wolves have seen Moeris first. But Menalcas will perform those songs for you often enough.

Moeris' apologia for ending the exchange is the confession that the ageing process imposes a limit on his own ability to remember lines of verse; at the same time, as his opening gnome suggests, time not only destroys individual memory, but also imposes an outer limit on the whole exercise of poetic re-performance. He reassures Lycidas that Menalcas will himself be at hand to perform the songs that he has forgotten. In fine, he does not call into question the value of the activity *per se* of shared memory, but simply regrets his own increased inability to play his part in the two-way process.

Vergilian bucolic has occasional recourse to the motif of youth versus age (*puer* vs. *senex*). The dichotomy provides a framework for differentiating between philosophical stances of paired personae and for articulating disparate perspectives on the phenomenon of loss. The motif has different valences in individual eclogues. In *Ecl.* 1, for instance, Meliboeus, the younger singer, places repeated emphasis on the age of his interlocutor, Tityrus (he goes so far as to duplicate the vocative designation, "fortunate *senex*" in his praise of the older musician) and it devolves upon the latter to document the limits to his own geriatric felicity in the wider scheme of things (Ch.2 above). In *Ecl.* 5 (below, Ch.5) there is palpable irony in the phrase "fortunate *puer*" that the older poet, Menalcas, uses to address Mopsus, since it occurs in the context of feigned mutual compliments that conceal an underlying rivalry as well as a contrast in encomiastic strategies. In *Ecl.* 9 the *puer/senex* opposition is also invoked as a rhetorical instrument for differentiating responses to adversity, but in this case it is the younger poet who places ebullient faith in the power of poetry to provide efficacious consolation, while the senior player becomes painfully aware of the limitations of the poetic medium in preventing or rectifying the dire consequences of dispossession. As is customary, Vergil is at pains to

stage the interplay of perspectives, rather than to promote an extraneous authorial solution to the predicament facing the shattered bucolic community.

In the case of the Lycidas/Moeris interplay, senescence is marked by the pathetic failure of an individual singer to recollect past songs in the repertoire of potential *solacia*. This very marker (failed *mneme*) was regarded by the community of the Garden as the criterion that matters most in the process of sustaining pleasure throughout one's life, since it radically affects the capacity to "practise the things that produce happiness."[20] Of the many passages in the Epicurean corpus that treat the topic of old age and its ramifications for the pursuit of philosophy, we may single out for its relevance to this eclogue the maxim: "he who forgets the good that he previously possessed, has this day become an old man."[21] The dramatization of Moeris' inability to continue the activity of shared re-performances is very much in tune with the Epicurean discourse surrounding the function of memory—a discourse that is transposed to the sphere of "poetic memory" in the context of *Ecl.* 9.

There is a further nuance in the "interplay of ideas" between Lycidas and Moeris that is obliquely discernible through the lens of onomastic wordplay. The first syllable of the name "Lyc-idas" is derived from the Greek word for "wolf" (*lykos*) and in rationalizing his vocal failure, Moeris alludes to the superstition that wolves have afflicted him with the equivalent of the "evil eye" ("the wolves have seen Moeris first"). The reference to wolves and their baneful effect on his voice is not without ironic bearing on the whole dynamic of the exchange of memories, for Lycidas twice represents himself in the poem as having *preempted* Moeris in his selection of remembered verses. In the first, he baldly states that he has "stolen" (*sublegi*) a passage of Menalcan poetry while eavesdropping on Moeris; in the second iteration, he no less openly reveals that his next sample of Menalcan poetry has been similarly purloined from a rehearsal of Moeris that he secretly overheard (44–45). In a word, the preemption of Moeris' voice has been taking place in the course of the ongoing exchange, and Vergilian wit is once again at work in the complaint voiced by Moeris that the wolves have seen him first. The ultimate act of preemption, however, is even more subtly represented than in the onomastic *ludus*, since it relates to the interchange of roles to which we have alluded above. Thus when Lycidas caps the exchange of citations

---

[20] *Ep. Men.* in *DL* 10.122.

[21] *Gnom.Vat.*19: οὐ γεγονότος ἀμνήμων ἀγαθοῦ γέρων τήμερον γεγένηται.

by describing the catasterism of Caesar and by focusing on the felicitous manifestation of the new god's benefactions, he also preempts the potential *solacium* in the present that Moeris has previously intimated in his first excerpt in which he recounted the promise of Menalcas to sing the praises of Varus in the hope of preserving the bucolic terrain.

Moeris' determination to bring the embedded song-exchanges to a close by pleading failure of memory does not meet with the approval of the impetuous Lycidas, who expresses outright irritation at the idea of deferring them until the return of Menalcas himself (56):

> Causando nostros in longum ducis amores[22]
>
> your pleas are causing us to defer our pleasures indefinitely.

His obstinate counter-proposal is to continue the mutual performances in one of two *loci*: either in a nearby spot in the vicinity of a tomb, or on the road while walking to town. Moeris vetoes both of these options, and the ulterior reasons for his rejection are pivotal to the argument of the eclogue as a whole.

The first option that Lycidas suggests as a site for resuming the exchange is worth detailed unpacking, since it is especially dense with symbolism of an inauspicious kind (57–61):

> et nunc omne tibi stratum silet aequor, et omnes,
> aspice, uentosi ceciderunt murmuris aurae.
> hinc adeo media est nobis uia; namque sepulcrum
> incipit apparere Bianoris. Hic, ubi densas
> agricolae stringunt frondes, hic, Moeri, canamus.
>
> and now the sea has become smooth and quiet for you, and all the breezes with their noise and bluster have died down. This is the halfway point of our journey, for the tomb of Bianor is coming into view. Here where the farmers are stripping the dense foliage, here, Moeris, let us sing.

The song-exchanges in the Eclogues are often introduced with overtures that foreground the choice of performance site—overtures that are orchestrated by polite negotiation and competition between the players. This preludic motif is normally staged as a choice among types of *shade* (*umbra*), and the ideal time of bucolic performance is, by default, the meridian, when the extreme heat makes the shade particularly welcome. Other essential features of the landscape include a covering of tree-leaves and/or overhanging

---

[22] *Amores* in this context is figurative code for the pleasures attendant on poetic exchange (see below in Ch.7, p. 126).

rock (*antrum*) that provide protection from the elements as well as shade. The complex of attributes that is truly ideal would resemble a conventional *locus amoenus*, of which a cool, refreshing breeze (*aura*) and pleasing natural sounds (e.g. a murmuring brook, the songs of birds or crickets) are typical elements.

These attractive features in respect to both place and time are notably absent from Lycidas' first option. To begin with, the place is located near the sea—far removed from a cosy inland meadow. Lycidas endeavors to recommend the spot nonetheless on the grounds that the noise of the ocean has momentarily vanished ("et nunc omne tibi stratum silet aequor"), but the very silence, Vergil hints, is unnatural, if not ominous. The hint is audible through the echo of a Theocritean passage (2.38), where the narrative context (the song of a so-called "Pharmaceutria" or sorcerer) presents the reader with a silence artificially induced by magic spells and rituals. Lycidas' description creates the similar impression that "a preternatural calm pervades the landscape."[23] The place has another conspicuous feature that is detrimental to bucolic song: the trees that would have provided the crucial *umbra*—the iconic stage setting—are being stripped of their leaves by farmers ("densas agricolae stringunt frondes"). In regard to time of performance, its defects are even more glaring, because we are told that it is now long past noon and the skies are threatening rain, as Lycidas acknowledges openly when introducing the fall-back second option (62–65):

> hic haedos depone, tamen ueniemus in urbem.
> aut si nox pluuiam ne colligat ante ueremur,
> cantantes licet usque (minus uia laedet) eamus;
> cantantes ut eamus, ego hoc te fasce leuabo.

> set the kids down here: we'll come to town in due course. Or if we fear that night may bring on the rain beforehand, we can sing as we walk along (the journey will be less painful); let's sing as we walk; I'll relieve you of your load.

When we add the threat of rain in an unsheltered locale to the other negative features we have enumerated, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the options being proferred by Lycidas constitute the very *antitype* of a bucolic locus of performance.

An egregious aspect of the place that makes it fundamentally inappropriate to a bucolic exchange is its fatal proximity to the *sepulchrum Bianoris* ("the tomb of Bianor"). The identity of Bianor was long treated as a conundrum by modern commentators who rightly repudiated the false

23 Tracy (1982) 329.

pseudo-historical trail first laid down by Servius.[24] That the name, Bianor, demonstrably alludes to a passage in the Iliad was first proposed (conclusively, in my view) by two scholars working independently in the latter half of the last century.[25] The Homeric intertext, once recognized as such, sheds light on a central "argument" of *Ecl.* 9: the disruptive repercussions of warfare on the poetic enterprise, in general, and on the bucolic universe, in particular. A brief excursus on the scope and significance of the allusion is imperative if Moeris' rejection of the site proposed by Lycidas is to be understood in its full symbolic import.[26]

The narrative context of the Homeric passage is the savage *aristeia* (conspicuous episode of battlefield prowess) that the poet accords to Agamemnon at the start of Bk.11. The first Trojan to meet his death in this furious rampage bears the name "Bienor" (variant of "Bianor"), which, as Tracy points out,[27] is a distinctive *hapax legomenon* in the epic. The time of his slaying is given a sylvan cast (*Il.*11.86–94):

> ἦμος δὲ δρυτόμος περ ἀνὴρ ὁπλίσσατο δεῖπνον
> οὔρεος ἐν βήσσῃσιν, ἐπεί τ' ἐκορέσσατο χεῖρας
> τάμνων δένδρεα μακρά, ἅδος τέ μιν ἵκετο θυμόν,
> σίτου τε γλυκεροῖο περὶ φρένας ἵμερος αἱρεῖ,
> τῆμος σφῇ ἀρετῇ Δαναοὶ ῥήξαντο φάλαγγας
> κεκλόμενοι ἑτάροισι κατὰ στίχας· ἐν δ' Ἀγαμέμνων
> πρῶτος ὄρουσ', ἕλε δ' ἄνδρα Βιάνορα ποιμένα λαῶν
> αὐτόν, ἔπειτα δ' ἑταῖρον Ὀϊλῆα πλήξιππον.

> But at the hour when a woodman makes ready his meal in the glades of a mountain, when his arms have grown tired with felling tall trees, and weariness comes upon his soul, and desire of sweet food seizes his heart, even then the Danaans by their valor broke the battalions, calling to their fellows through the lines. And among them Agamemnon rushed forth the first and slew a warrior, Bienor, shepherd of the host—himself and after him his comrade, Oïleius, driver of horses.[28]

[24] See Coleman ad line 60. Servian false leads are the cause of innumerable interpretative dead ends in the secondary literature on the entire Vergilian corpus.

[25] Brenk (1981); Tracy (1982). The detailed observations made by these two scholars inform my reading of this portion of the Eclogue. On the Bienor/Bianor link, see also Lipka (174–175).

[26] In addition to the Homeric allusions explored here, it may also be relevant to Moeris' rejection of the tombstone venue that in Theocr. *Id.* 7 the tomb functions as a half-way marker on the road from the polis to the country (the inverse direction of the *Ecl.* 9 journey).

[27] Tracy (1982) 339.

[28] English translation of the Homeric passages is taken (with modifications of archaistic diction) from A.T. Murray (1924).

Bianor is assigned a formulaic noun phrase, "shepherd of the host" (ποιμένα λαῶν), which is figurative and therefore not necessarily indicative of pastoral status *per se*. However, the phrase foreshadows the vocation of the next pair of Trojans who are ruthlessly dispatched by Agamemon—shepherds who had been taken captive by Achilles on Mt. Ida while tending their flocks. Immediately after describing in gory detail the slaying of Bianor's charioteer, Oïleus, the epic poet goes on to narrate the grim fate of the two shepherds (101–109):

> αὐτὰρ ὃ βῆ Ἶσόν τε καὶ Ἄντιφον ἐξεναρίξων
> υἷε δύω Πριάμοιο νόθον καὶ γνήσιον ἄμφω
> εἰν ἑνὶ δίφρῳ ἐόντας· ὃ μὲν νόθος ἡνιόχευεν,
> Ἄντιφος αὖ παρέβασκε περικλυτός· ὥ ποτ' Ἀχιλλεὺς
> Ἴδης ἐν κνημοῖσι δίδη μόσχοισι λύγοισι,
> ποιμαίνοντ' ἐπ' ὄεσσι λαβών, καὶ ἔλυσεν ἀποίνων.
> δὴ τότε γ' Ἀτρεΐδης εὐρὺ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων
> τὸν μὲν ὑπὲρ μαζοῖο κατὰ στῆθος βάλε δουρί,
> Ἄντιφον αὖ παρὰ οὖς ἔλασε ξίφει, ἐκ δ' ἔβαλ' ἵππων.

> Then he went on to slay Isus and Antiphus, two sons of Priam, one a bastard son and born in wedlock, the two being in one car: the bastard held the reins, but glorious Antiphus stood by his side to fight. These two had Achilles once bound with fresh withes amid the spurs of Ida, taking them as they were herding their sheep, and had set them free for a ransom. But now the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, struck Isus on the breast above the nipple, and Antiphus he smote hard by the ear with his sword, and cast him forth from his chariot.

Taken in concert, the two sets of slayings (Bianor and Antiphus along with their respective charioteers) associate Greek martial activity near Troy with a fatal impingement on the sphere of the tranquil pastoral life.[29] In the Vergilian allusion in *Ecl.* 9, a prominent part is played by a salient onomastic pun, for the first two syllables of "Bianor" signify "violence." The name "*Bianor*," then is intertextually conjoined with the motif of the violent irruption of warfare into the world of bucolic poets/herdsmen. The motif of irruption in the Homeric intertext is also reflected early in the eclogue when Moeris proclaims the vulnerability of poetry in the face of the weapons of war (*tela inter Martia*: 11–13).

---

[29] On the subject of the disruption of the pastoral life by the Trojan War, see especially the perceptive remarks by Taplin (1980), p. 7: "The pathos of the ruthless warrior cutting down the innocent pastoral world is quintessentially Homeric."

What are the ramifications of this allusion[30] to violent death for the broader interpretation of the herdsmen's interaction in *Ecl.* 9? The two singers approach a terrain within sight of the tomb of Bianor at the midpoint of their journey ("hinc adeo media est nobis via"). The spot marks the pivotal limit of the poetic exchange (cut short, as we have seen, by an apologetic Moeris) and brings the duo up against a visual reminder of the violence and destruction of the war that has shattered the peace of their bucolic ambience. Moeris' aversion to making this place the site of continued performance reflects the negative associations that appertain to the essentially literary figure, Bianor, who operates as an emblem of an archetypal ruinous conflict. The tomb also marks the limit of poetic consolation even for those who have resorted to the therapy of recollection.

To review the ideational itinerary of *Ecl.* 9: the latent tension between the singers that eventually comes into the open in view of the landmark "tomb of Bianor" is a consequence of divergent expectations and perspectives between them on the efficacy of poetic discourse when faced with the challenge of violence and the sequelae of warfare (the threat to the lives of Moeris and Menalcas, and the forced dispossession of the farmers in the region). The philosophical divergence in this eclogue, however, is nuanced rather than sharply defined, for both Lycidas and Moeris appreciate the therapeutic value of past pleasures, in so far as recollected performances can go some way towards providing solace for presently dislocated musicians.[31] Such replays do not go all the way in the estimation of old Moeris, the veteran performer of bucolic poetry. The *puer*, Lycidas, on the other hand, is willing to accept compromises in the conditions of performance in his eager pursuit of immediate gratification of the pleasures of a song-fest, whereas the senior Moeris realizes that permanent long-term consolation depends on the restoration of the appropriate space of bucolic rehearsals. In Moeris' far less rosy-tinted lens, a successful mission of Menalcas to preserve the landscape is the precondition for a felicitous poetic ambiance (66–67):

---

[30] In addition to the primary Homeric intertext, they may well be a second (albeit obscure) literary reference obliquely evoked in the name Bianor, which also occurs in a Hellenistic epigram of Diotimus (*AP* 7. 261 = *GP* 1735–1738). The epigram features a bereaved mother who heaps up a tumulus at the burial-site (sema) of her prematurely deceased son, Bianor. Premature death is, of course, a topos of Greek and Roman epitaphs, but the scene painted is reminiscent of the *pathos* of bucolic figures mourned by their mothers.

[31] See Cicero: *De Finibus* 1.17.57 (cited as an epigraph to this chapter), where the Epicurean Torquatus extols the doctrine of the therapeutic value of the recollection of past blessings on the part of the enlightened.

> Desine plura, puer, et quod nunc instat agamus;
> carmina tum melius, cum venerit ipse, canemus.

> No more of this, young man. Let's get on with the pressing demands of the hour. We will perform our songs with greater success when the master himself gets back.

Moeris' closing insistence on attending to the extra-poetic exigencies of the present recalls the substance of his very first contribution to the embedded exchange, which reproduced a segment of a praise poem aimed at winning the support of Varus, presumed to be one of the officials in charge of implementing the land distributions among the veterans in the region near Mantua. In this respect, his response to the crisis of dislocation resembles the attitude of Tityrus in *Ecl.* 1, who is proactive in his mission to seek the restorative intervention of the quasi-divine ruler in Rome.

Since both the 1st and the 9th Eclogues foreground the shock of dispossession, Vergil's readers are therewith furnished with a "control" that permits us to array and compare four differing responses to *tyche* on the part of the two pairs of poets/herdsmen, Tityrus/Meliboeus and Moeris/Lycidas. As is his practice throughout his extant works, Vergil does not overtly undertake to advocate the response of a particular persona; on the other hand, we are free to infer from his portrayal of the stance of the older figures, Tityrus and (indirectly via Moeris) Menalcas, that a profound awareness of the *reversibility of fortune* is an important dimension of *sapientia*. In the disquieting environment of *Ecl.* 9, the reversal of fortune envisaged by the *senex* is expected to restore the peace, and with it the *otium*, that are crucial to the secure exercise of the poetic vocation.

CHAPTER FOUR

VICISSITUDE WRIT LARGE: THE ONTOLOGY OF THE GOLDEN AGE (*ECL.* 4)

In the programmatic opening Eclogue, Vergil stages a dialogue that focuses, as we have seen, on the contrasting responses of individual actors to the experience of vicissitude. In the framework of Eclogue 4, he vastly enlarges the stage to encompass an ambitious monologue on the topic of what may be labeled, "Vicissitude writ large." The changes in fortune that he unfolds in the prophetic vision of the latter poem are global, if not cosmic, in scope, affecting not merely individual bucolic *personae*, but entire world "ages" (*saecula*; *gentes; aeva*). If the first eclogue provides us with a microcosm of changes (*vices*) that take place within a circumscribed pastoral sphere, the fourth predicates a series of recurrent changes on a macrocosmic scale. Despite the huge disparity in scope, however, the underlying theme of the challenge of vicissitude remains fundamental to Vergil's thinking, and it is this common denominator of mutability and its ramifications for human existence that constitutes the subject of this chapter. After examining the ontology of the Golden Age in the fourth eclogue, our discussion will turn to a brief comparative analysis of the same topic as it is carried forward in the *Georgics*. The fundamental consistency of Vergil's philosophical reflections on how to cope with vicissitude will, I hope, be confirmed in the course of the comparison.[1]

The most important preconception undergirding Vergil's representation of the sequence of world ages is that of its *cyclicality*. In this respect he departs conspicuously from the linear model of the ages' evolution represented most notably in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.[2] Although the intrinsically cyclical nature of the Vergilian conception is occasionally acknowledged by leading scholars, its negative ramifications for the presupposition of a stable Golden Age to come have not, in my view, been clearly articulated or

---

[1] The question of consistency or "coherence" versus contradiction in Vergil's multiple evocations of the Golden Age motif is ably analysed in Perkell (2002). For her astute discussion of 4. see especially 12–18.

[2] On Vergil's reconceptualization of Hesiod's races, see the thorough discussion in Gatz (1967) 86–103.

appropriately emphasized. Vergil's language on this score is very explicit and unequivocal and, for this reason, a brief review of the phraseology of the defining passage is instructive for our argument (4–7):

> Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas;
> magnus *ab integro* saeclorum *nascitur* ordo.
> iam *redit* et Virgo, *redeunt* Saturnia regna,
> iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.
>
> The last phase of Cumaean prophecy has already come to pass; the great sequence of ages is being *reborn*. Now the Virgin *is returning*; the reign of Saturn *is returning*, now a new progeny is being sent down from the lofty skies.

The adverbial phrase, *ab integro* ("anew"), unambiguously flags the idea of *recurrence*, which is then immediately confirmed in the following line by the prominent reiteration of the verb *redire* ("return") after the main caesura. To borrow E.R. Dodd's nomenclature, Vergil is here promulgating the concept of an Eternal Recurrence, rather than the rival and more prevalent Greco-Roman paradigm of a Lost Paradise.[3] What the poet describes in the form of a "golden line" (4) as the *ultima aetas* (last phase) of Sibylline prophecy is therefore to be understood, not as the final *telos* in a unilinear evolution, but rather as a periodic phenomenon.[4] The unstated, but ineluctable, implication of a cyclic conception is that the incipient Golden Age, like all the other *saecula* in the sequence, is by no means permanent, but subject to a law of vicissitude operating on a cosmic scale (*magnus ordo*: "grand sequence"). Moreover, the return of each recycled age is in no way to be ascribed to individual human agency, but instead to a built-in, reiterative process in the natural order.

The vatic voice of *Ecl.* 4 imagines the rebirth of the new order as being coeval with the birth of a child (*puer*) of divine provenance (*nova progenies caelo demittitur alto*). The subsequent growth of this numinous child is portrayed as paralleling the gradual development of the Golden Age (*gens aurea*: 9). This representation of a parallel development, however, is subtly conflated, in Vergil's diction, with the notion that the *puer* may actually

---

[3] Dodds (1973) p. 3; West (1978) 172–177.

[4] The anthropogist Edmund Leach acutely analyses the conceptual differences between the recurrent (and reversible) and the unilinear (and irreversible) models of Time (Leach 1961) 124–136. It is not uncommon for scholars of the Eclogues to acknowledge the cyclicality of the ages as foregrounded by Vergil, and then proceed to discount its implications. Cp. Coleman ad vv. 4 and, especially, 10 ("[...] a cyclic repetition of the sequence must be assumed, but the allusion is not developed further"). Clausen even goes so far as to claim, against all the evidence, that the Golden Age is "immune to deterioration." p. 125.

embody, or incarnate, the *gens*. In this interpretation, the birth of the child (ontogeny) both represents, and merges with, the rebirth of the *gens* (phylogeny), so that the former becomes, *in statu nascendi*, an icon of the latter. This implicit linkage between microcosm and macrocosm is provocatively reflected in the text; for we hear, in very close succession, of nascent *saeculum* (saeclorum *nascitur* ordo: 5) and nascent *puer* (*nascenti puero*: 8). Is the linkage to be conceived as purely *metonymic* (i.e. as two closely related events), or as, in effect, *metaphoric* (i.e. *puer* as symbol of the age)?[5] Vergil's narrative elaborating the phased growth of *puer* and *saeculum* (lines 11–45) presents the two phenomena as taking place in tandem, but the very intimacy of the imagined association encourages the reader to think of the *puer* as, in some sense, emblematic of the embryonic *saeculum*.

Whatever concrete historical instantiation Vergil may or may not have had in mind for the *puer*,[6] it is apparent that the prediction of the birth of a divine or semi-divine child who is destined to rule over a pacified world takes the form of a wish-fulfillment narrative in the guise of a prophecy. What is crucially relevant to a deeper understanding of the poem's worldview is not the identity of the child *per se*, but the qualities of character and moral leadership that will fit him for the grand role that he will be expected to assume in the renewed golden age existence. Vergil's portrait of the formation of the ideal ruler reflects Aristotle's famous dictum in the *Poetics* regarding the philosophical nature of poetry, as compared with history. In poetic discourse the particular is in service of the universal and the generic. In sum, the anonymous *puer* of *Ecl.* 4 is not reducible to a concrete personage, on the one hand, or a mere abstraction, on the other. As a narrative sign, in any case, it is, by definition, both concrete emblem and abstract idea. It would be truer to Vergil's basic conception to say that the *puer* exists (or will come into being) for the sake of the ideas that he embodies. These include the central hope for a global transformation from catastrophic bad fortune (internecine civil strife conducted on a world stage) to universal peace and prosperity.

---

[5] The implications of the antinomy for literary studies (poetics) were first memorably set forth in a seminal article by Jakobson (1956).

[6] The deliberate vagueness of Vergil's language has not precluded unverifiable speculation. Carcopino (1930) expatiates at length on the vexed isuue. Coleman (pp. 150–152) has a convenient summary of the main *puer*-identity hypotheses. Of these the most plausible, in terms of the generic requirements of the epithalamium, is the anticipated offspring of Anthony and Octavia (the addressee, Pollio, was closely associated with Anthony, who traced his ancestry back to Jupiter via the deified Hercules [Tarn 1922]); More recently this identification has been ably defended by Du Quesnay (1976) 31–38.

Before we turn attention to certain aspects of the linked phases of the co-development of *puer* and *aetas*, it is essential to heed Vergil's intimation regarding the *contingent* timing of the appearance of the Golden Age.[7] The text makes it clear that the child is due to appear in a period of transition between Iron and Golden *saecula*. As we noted earlier, however, the actual arrival of the Golden Age is not itself subject to contingency, since it is automatically recycled in obedience to a universal law of nature. The parturition of the infant is at first presented as a function of the favorable disposition of the goddess of childbirth, Lucina (8–10):

> tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum
> desinet ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,
> casta fave Lucina; tuus iam regna Apollo.

> Only do your part, chaste Lucina, and look favorably on the birth of the boy, with whom the Iron Age shall first come to an end and the Golden shall arise throughout the whole world; your Apollo now rules.

The appeal to Lucina is in the form of a hymnal request,[8] so in theory, at least, the outcome is dependent on the goddess' favor. In the sequel, however, the speaker takes the good graces of Lucina for granted, and the prayer functions as a "self-fulfilling prophecy." The rhetorical mode of a speech act that is cast in the future tense is maintained through the remainder of the eclogue. Though the strict logic of the hymnal phraseology presupposes that fulfillment of the prayer is in the hands of the *numen*, the poet moves seamlessly from asking the goddess' blessing to presuming its *incipient* enactment within a specific time-frame: the period of Pollio's consulship (11–12):

> teque adeo decus hoc aevi, te consule, inibit,
> Pollio, et *incipient* magni procedere menses.

> And it is under your consulship—yours and no other—Pollio, that this glory of the age shall come into being, and the procession of the great months *shall commence*.

Though the entire prophecy thereafter unfolds in a tone of certitude, the narrator is careful to differentiate his mortal voice (with its proper deference to the goddess, Lucina) from the authoritative, oracular voice of the Fates (Parcae), to whom he retrospectively attributes the detailed script of the evolution of the Golden Age (46–47):

---

[7] Cp. Hubbard 1995 / 1996 on the contingency of the poet/ruler. He corroborates his point by examining the intertextual relations with Catullus *C.* 64. See also Putnam (2000) 118–124.

[8] The so-called "Du-Styl" of hymnal address to a divinity.

> 'talia saecla' suis dixerunt 'currite' fusis
> concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae.
>
> "Hasten on these ages" said the Parcae to their spindles, in concert with the enduring power of the Fates.

The rhetorical ascription of the preceding prophetic utterances to the Parcae enables the narrator to achieve divine sanction for his private vision.[9]

What can we learn from the biographical script of the *puer* about the poet's views on the preconditions for the realization of his grand hopes for change on a world-wide scale? First and foremost, the ideal future ruler, despite his generic inheritance as heaven-sent progeny, will have to receive and assimilate the appropriate education, or *bildung*, that will shape his ethical perspective. Thus he will acquire fundamental knowledge about *virtus* from texts he will read (*legere*) that feature the exploits of heroic and parental models (26–30):

> at simul heroum laudes et facta parentis
> iam legere *et quae sit poteris cognoscere virtus*,
> molli paulatim flavescet campus arista
> incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva
> et durae quercus sudabunt roscida mella.
>
> but as soon as you will be capable of reading the eulogies of heroes and the exploits of your parent *and of understanding what constitutes 'virtus,'* the plain will gradually grow golden with the ripened grain, and the purple grape-cluster will hang from uncultivated briers, and the rugged oak-trees will drip dewy honey.

The act of reading, Vergil implies, will go well beyond mere familiarization with historical events ("laudes heroum et facta parentis") to encompass philosophical insight, for it leads to an understanding of the very nature of *arete* ("quae sit poteris cognoscere virtus").[10] The idea of the child's coming to know what constitutes *virtus* is a far from trivial aspect of his upbringing that contains ethical overtones derived from more than one Hellenistic philosophical school. The ethical insights gained by the *puer* through his *paideia* are essential to the poet's projection of an idealized maturation. In a noteworthy verbal repetition, we are apprised in the closing lines of the poem, which go back to the child's neo-natal existence via the famous

---

[9] On the epithalamian formal aspect imparted by the allusion to the Catullan wedding-hymn (*C.* 64), see especially Mette (1973) 77–78; Du Quesnay (1976) 68–75.

[10] As my rendition of *virtus* as Greek *arete* is meant to register, *virtus* here embraces more than valor, though the connotations of the English "virtue" are to be ruled out.

vignette of the precocious smile (*risus praecox*), by virtue of which the infant must learn early on to recognize his mother (the word *cognoscere* reappears in this context) (60–63):

> Incipe, parve puer, *risu cognoscere matrem*;
> (matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses)
> incipe, parve puer: qui non risere parenti,
> nec deus hunc mensa, dea nec dignata cubile est.
>
> Begin, little boy, to *know your mother with a smile*: (ten months have brought your mother tedious travail). Begin, little boy: boys that fail to smile at a mother will not earn the honor of a god's table nor a goddess' couch.[11]

The child's proper cognitive development will manifest itself precociously in the cradle and will blossom later on into that deepening knowledge that comes with judicious reading and ethical insight. The poet's final apostrophe to the baby interjects a qualification into the prognosis: this child's ultimate success, which will be marked by his social intercourse with divine beings, is not guaranteed in advance. It will come to pass on condition that the pupil proves receptive to an ideal education. "The child is father of the man" (to borrow Wordsworth's well-known line) and Vergil's smiling infant foreshadows the growth of the ideal *puer* into a paradigm of heroic *virtus*.

There has been a formidable amount of philological investigation (especially concentrated in the early decades of the 20th century) into the cultural sources of the Vergilian conception of a divine child affiliated with a temporal mega-cycle.[12] The results indicate that Vergil has created an idiosyncratic blend of Eastern and Western ideas in fashioning his ideal *puer*. Without enumerating the specific elements that can be shown to have an "Oriental" provenance (these include, *inter alia*, Egyptian, Hebraic, and Persian components), we may pose the general question of the relevance of a transcultural vision of the golden age for Vergil's poem. As we have noted above, the purview announced by the speaker in his prologue involves an expansion of horizons to embrace the entire world. While the representative site that registers the changes in the natural order is still the bucolic landscape, the flora and fauna that the poet describes in his blueprint for the enlarged paradisal environment are drawn, not surprisingly, from a variety of geographical regions (cp. "Assyrium volgo nascetur amomum" [25]: "Assyrian

---

[11] In line 63 I follow those editors who read: "*qui ... parenti*" as against "*cui ... parentes*." See the full *apparatus criticus* in Geymonat.

[12] See. e.g. Norden (1924); Jeanmaire (1930); Rose (1942); Nisbet (2008).

spikenard will grow everywhere").[13] The idealized universe is distinctly *transcultural*, as befits the scale of the fundamental conception of a global transformation.

The nexus of ideas and emblems connecting the divinely descended world-ruler (cp. "cara deum suboles, magnum Iovis incrementum": "cherished offspring of the gods, great descendent of Jupiter" [49])[14] with the recurrence of the Golden Age was literally "in circulation" several years before Vergil reproduced the ensemble in his celebrated "Messianic" eclogue. Compelling evidence for this universe of ideas (*Gedankenwelt*) resides in the numismatic record, which is sometimes overlooked or downplayed in the secondary literature. As long ago as 1930 Andreas Alföldi drew attention to an array of coins, dating to the latter stages of Julius Caesar's career, that provide us with striking visual representations of a symbolic complex that associates the concepts of world-governance, Sibylline prophecy, and golden age plenitude.[15] The confident prognoses uttered by the vatic speaker of *Ecl.* 4 regarding the imminent appearance of such a ruler are better aligned with this complex of iconic ideas, rather than with a more narrowly conceived faith on Vergil's part in a particular Sibylline prophecy. At a deeper level of analysis, however, the speaker's robust assurance (or, if we prefer, "optimism") is grounded on a philosophical acceptance of the principle of "vicissitude writ large." The prediction that bad times would not continue for ever (cp. Meliboeus' contrary attitude to calamity in *Ecl.* 1) and would inevitably be transformed into good, rests on an ontological premiss that we saw reflected in the "Tityran" world-view (above Ch.2). In what follows, I hope to demonstrate that the interlinkage between the concepts of *aurea aetas* and the cyclical concept of regular vicissitude is central to the world-view expressed in Vergil's *Georgics*, a poem in which representations of change in a "bucolic" mode exist in profusion. The chronologically later text will thus furnish us with a laboratory, so to speak, in which we may test the consistency of the Vergilian conception of the cyclical nature of things.

Vergil's profound meditation on the grand theme of vicissitude and its ramifications for man's existence is elaborated and refined in the thematic universe of the *Georgics*. Given the extent of the elaboration, our analysis of the philosophical interconnection between *Eclogues* and *Georgics* will be

---

13 Cp also botanical items of Egyptian origin: e.g. *colocasia*; *acanthus* (v. 20) (with Clausen's note ad loc.).

14 For this interpretation of the appositional phrase, "magnum Jovis incrementum," see Frank (1916).

15 Alföldi (1930).

confined to delineating those elements (primarily articulated in passages from *Georgics* 1 and 2) that pertain to the representation of the World Ages—in particular, of the Golden Age and its relation to that of the Iron.[16]

The close continuity in Vergil's maturing thought is salient in the framing prayers that open and close the first Georgic. Both hymnal "book-ends" envisage the ideal world-ruler who will preside over the transition from Iron to Golden eras as embodied in the figure of the young Octavian. The beneficent ruler in the prologue to *G.*1 is imagined as destined to join the august company of the gods (24–25)—in short, as a virtual, if not actual, *numen* (cp. *Ecl.* 1, 41–42, where Tityrus travels to Rome to make his appeal to a *iuvenis* clearly to be identified with Octavian who is already also a *praesens divus* [41]). In keeping with the profile of the divine savior of *Ecl.* 4, the *iuvenis* of the closing prayer of *G.*1 will usher in world peace and achieve deification, taking his reserved place as a *kosmokrator* (cosmic ruler). The language of the final prayer makes the bridge with the emerging new age quite explicit (498–501):

> di patrii, Indigites, et Romule Vestaque mater,
> quae Tuscum Tiberim et Romania Palatia servas,
> *hunc saltem everso iuvenem succurrere saeclo*
> ne prohibete.

> Gods of our ancestors, gods of our native soil—you, Romulus and you, mother Vesta, who protect Tuscan Tiber and Roman Palatine, do not prevent *this youth, at least, from coming to the aid of our topsy-turvy age.*

The *saeclum eversum* at stake is indeed none other than the Iron Age, which had approached its nadir in the assassination of Octavian's adoptive father, Julius Caesar—a dark moment when the Sun-god covered his head in horror (466–468):

> ille etiam exstincto miseratus Caesare Romam,
> cum caput obscura nitidum ferrugine texit
> *impia*que aeternam timuerunt *saecula* noctem.

> He also took pity on Rome at the time of Caesar's demise, when he shrouded his shining head in black gloom, and *the wicked age* feared endless night.

The *iuvenis*, then, is expected to inaugurate the next *saeclum*. What was cryptically projected in *Ecl.* 4 in terms of a phased script for the future is re-introduced boldly in the inaugural book of the *Georgics* as already in a nascent stage of fulfillment.

---

[16] On the varied representations of the Golden Age in the Georgics, see the excellent discussion in Perkell (2002) 18–27.

Vergil pictures manifestations of an ideal Golden Age existence in two major passages in *G.*1. The first version is presented in stark contrast with the current age of Iron, whose celestial overseer is Jupiter (121–128):

> pater ipse colendi
> haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem
> movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda
> nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.
> *ante Jovem* nulli subigebant arva coloni;
> ne signare quidem aut partiri limite campus
> fas erat; in medium quaerebant, ipsaque tellus
> omnia liberius nullo poscente ferebat.

> The father himself willed that the path of tillage should not be easy, and he subjected working the fields to technical knowledge, sharpening the wits of mortals by worries, and did not allow his kingdom to stagnate in in heavy sloth. *Before Jove*, no tenants cultivated the fields; it was not permitted even to partition land and mark off boundaries; men strove for the common good, and earth itself, without urging, brought forth everything most generously.

The thematic context of this capsule portrayal of a pre-Jovian *aurea aetas* is the oppressive condition of ceaseless *labor* (toil) that afflicts humankind in the present age. The *labor* of the farmer is, of course, a major focus of *G.*1, but it is apparent throughout the book that the farmer is to be seen as representative of humanity as a whole. There has been a prolonged and inconclusive debate in the secondary literature on the topic of whether Vergil's world-view with respect to the farmer's incessant *labor* is to be understood as "optimistic" or "pessimistic."[17] If we reframe the issue, however, with reference to the gold/iron polarity, the debate immediately loses whatever tenuous cogency it might have been thought to have. The picture that emerges in *G.*1 with regard to the failures of man's *labor* clearly reflects the "downside" of the contemporary age of Iron, which is marked by the reign of Jupiter. Thus vignettes that encapsulate the frustrations of the farmer's *labor* do not postulate an absolute or irreversible condition (an inherently "pessimistic" world-view), but rather they exemplify contingencies (in this case, negative ones) that define one pole of human existence. Proponents of the "pessimistic" school point to the famous images of unsuccessful *labor* in the book, such as that of the hapless rower who toils upstream in a river only to be swept downstream as soon as he relaxes his efforts (*Georg.*1.197–203):

[17] See the summary remarks of Volk (2008) 4–5.

uidi lecta diu et multo spectata labore
degenerare tamen, ni uis humana quotannis
maxima quaeque manu legeret: sic omnia fatis
in peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri,
non aliter quam qui aduerso uix flumine lembum
remigiis subigit, si bracchia forte remisit,
atque illum in praeceps prono rapit alueus amni.

I have seen [seeds] that were picked over a long time and examined with great care degenerate nonetheless, if human effort did not year after year select the largest by hand. Thus by the workings of fate all things hasten to the worse and slipping down, go backwards; just as if a rower whose oars can barely force his skiff against the current should by chance relax his arms, and at once the channel carries it off headlong downstream.

Page's comment on this passage is instructive: "a characteristic instance of Virgil's 'pessimism,' and also of the art by which he embellishes his subject with philosophical reflections." The quotation marks he places around the word "pessimism" register a cautious awareness of the inadequacy of the term to embrace the full complexity of Vergil's point of view regarding the ebb and flow of human circumstances, and the reference to "philosophical reflections" at least tentatively acknowledges the poet's propensity to deep thought, even though he considers the image and the accompanying *sententia* as an "embellishment" of art.[18] If one sets aside the "pessimism" label as reductive and radically misleading, it becomes clear that an effect of the vivid metaphor of frustrated *labor* in this and other passages in the poem[19] underscores the stringent and unforgiving challenges of life in the iron age, which is itself unstable and impermanent. Vergil's larger point is that, while *labor* is an imperative of the human condition in a post-Saturnian era, it does not in itself determine success or failure, since the alternation between the two is ultimately beyond the control of human actors.

What holds true for the graphic metaphors of the rower is no less valid for the description of the violent storm that wipes out all traces of the farmer's patient toil (1. 311–334). The scope of the calamity is monstrous: unleashed forces of wind and rain cause total destruction of the farmer's crops. At the very center of the storm Vergil places the awesome figure of its celestial agent, Jupiter (328–331):

---

[18] Page's remark is cited by Thomas in his commentary on the Georgics ad loc.; however, the latter goes on to argue for a pessimism that "is the very heart of the poem."

[19] The famous image of the charioteer who loses control of the chariot with which Vergil concludes the first book (511–514) is also often taken as evidence of his predominantly pessimistic outlook.

> *ipse pater media nimborum in nocte* corusca
> fulmina molitur dextra, quo maxima motu
> terra tremit; fugere ferae et mortalia corda
> per gentis humilis stravit pavor …

> *The Father himself in a midnight formed by storm-clouds* wields his thunderbolts with flashing right hand, and at the impact the vast earth trembles; wild beasts flee, and mortal hearts the world over are crushed down in terror …

The storm that levels the world, obliterating the results of man's *labor*, stands as synecdoche for the predominant disorder of the *saeculum eversum*. The dramatic intervention of a malevolent Jupiter whose agency has world-wide repercussions (*per gentes*) serves to remind us that his sphere of jurisdiction is all-encompassing. At the same time, however, the very same deity is portrayed as benevolent in the different context of the annual return Spring (*G*.2. 325–329). The argument in the *Georgics* as it pertains to *labor*, then, cannot be properly understood outside of the over-arching framework of "vicissitude writ large."

This interpretation of the variable success of *labor* in the *G*.1 becomes even more compelling if we turn attention to the representations of the Golden Age that come to the fore in the second book of the poem. If the first book presents a "dark background" of negative fortune for the farmer (and, by extension, mankind at large), the second, by contrast, paints a picture of a positive state of affairs for the agriculturalist. The potential and actual oscillation between the two sets of circumstances is an essential aspect of the "message" that the didactic poet articulates in the poem as a whole. Nowhere is this more clearly registered than in the leitmotif of *labor* as it is further elaborated in *G*.2. Even those scholars who wish to reduce Vergil's outlook on *labor* to "pessimism" (thus privileging one pole in the oscillation) are obliged to acknowledge that in Bk.2 *labor* is generally portrayed as having successful outcomes.[20]Arboriculture, especially the cultivation of the vine, is the main topic of the second book, and the blessings of the wine-god, Bacchus, may be said to offer seasonal consolation for the hardships and setbacks so vividly etched in the course of the opening book. Although the content of Bk.2 appears, on the surface, to be in antithetical relationship to Bk.1, the shift from unsuccess to success is, at bottom, fully congruent with Vergil's Janus-like ontological conception.

---

[20] See Thomas (1988) on the "*laudes Italiae*" passage (*Georg*.2, 136–176).

Images of a Golden Age existence ruled over by Saturn, as opposed to Jupiter, occur at several pivotal junctures in the unfolding argument regarding vicissitude that is carried forward in Bk.2. Generic scenes depicting a quasi-paradisiacal life are woven into the rhetorical fabric of three interrelated encomia (conventionally labelled *laudes*) that make overt references to the master-concept of a Saturnian *saeculum*. A brief analysis of select topoi in each encomiastic passage will serve to adumbrate a shared conceptual paradigm in Vergilian thought.

In the celebrated *laus Italiae* ("praise of Italy") the *laudator* begins with a priamel (focussing device) that exalts his native land over all rivals (such as Persia, India and Arabia) in respect to nature's blessings (136–139). Italy is unabashedly characterized as a virtual cornucopia that trumps all other geographical regions of the globe. Her climate is described in idyllic terms as a "perpetual springtime" (*ver adsiduum*: 149).[21] In the memorable peroration of the encomium, the epithet "Saturnian" is conspicuously applied to both the land and its people: "Salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus, / magna virum ..." ("Hail, great mother of fruits, Saturnian land, great mother of heroes ...") (173–174).

How are we to reconcile this rhapsodic account of Saturnian flourishing and plenitude with the discouraging experiences attributed to the embattled Italian farmer in Bk.1? Is Vergil simply contradicting himself? To apprehend fully how Jovian and Saturnian manifestations may coexist, in Vergil's grand scheme, on the stage of Italy, it is illuminating to recall that the poet of *Ecl.* 4 unambigously represents successive ages in the ongoing cycle as overlapping. The transitory coexistence of disparate conditions of life is therefore is explicable by the notion of *vestigia*—"*traces*" that persist from one age to the next (developed in lines 31–36). Because the poet imagines the turn-over between ages as gradual and interlocking, simultaneity of traits between earlier and later stages in the cycle of *saecula* is altogether conceivable. As for the image of a "perpetual springtime:" the expression is to be understood as a conventional trope for an idyllic climate, rather than a literal representation of a state of being beyond time and change.

The figurative conflation of a regular, recurrent season in the circuit of a small *annus* with a world-wide condition defining a mega-age (*magnus annus*) is even more pronounced in the second *laus* devoted expressly

---

[21] This hyperbolic feature of the encomium of Itlay is certainly not meant to be taken literally. Vergil is not here denying the cyclicality of the seasonal *annus*.

to springtime (*ver*) in the Italian farmer's almanac. In the context of a discussion of the best time to plant vines, the didactic speaker launches into rapturous praise of the fecund season of spring. His paean comes to a climax in a comparison with the dawn of mankind, a mostly Edenic age in which a mild "Spring" serves to relieve the rigors of a primal existence (2.336–342):

> non alios prima crescentis origine mundi
> inluxisse dies aliumve habuisse tenorem
> crediderim; ver illud erat, *ver magnus agebat*
> *orbis* et hibernis parcebant flatibus Euri,
> cum primae lucem pecudes hausere, virumque
> terrea[22] progenies duris caput extulit arvis,
> immissaeque ferae silvis et sidera caelo.

> No different, I should think, were the days that shone and continued to shine at the very dawn of the burgeoning world; it was a time of spring, *the great globe was undergoing spring* and the East winds held back their wintry blasts, when cattle first imbibed the light, and an earthborn race of men reared its head from the solid fields, and wild beasts took to the woods and stars to the sky.

The primitive age envisioned here exhibits an admixture of "hard" and "soft" elements, which is consistent with the notion of overlapping traits, as opposed to clear lines of demarcation, between the ages. At any rate, the master trope of a youthful "springtime of the world" suggests an analogy with the grand cycle of the ages, with springtime approximating an era of relatively "golden" ease prior to an eventual degeneration into full-blown iron. The association of a primal time of humankind with the attributes of a Saturnian existence is paralleled in the humorous account of paleo-history with an Epicurean slant that Silenus delivers in *Ecl.* 6, where the *Saturnia regna* follow on the regeneration of man after the punitive flood.[23]

Bk.2 of the *Georgics* closes with an extended eulogy of the farmer's life (458–540). As Thomas, in particular, has correctly emphasized, the entire *laus* contains a "deliberate invocation" of the blessings of the *Saturnia regna*.[24] Several salient aspects of this idealized account relate to concepts that

---

22 The text is uncertain: the majority of mss. transmit the epithet *ferrea*; the variant *terrea* (earth-born) receives strong support from the clear Lucretian echoes of the passage at *DRN* 5.925–926. On this issue, see further Thomas ad loc.

23 As a comic figure, Silenus is not, of course, a *persona* who speaks for Vergil. Nonetheless there is a structural comparison to be drawn between his historical sketch and the sequence in *Georg.*2 of a degenerate "iron" existence (punished by Jupiter's flood) succeeded by a version of *Saturnia regna*.

24 See Thomas' extensive documentation ad loc.

lie at the basis of the sketch of the nascent Golden Age in *Ecl.* 4. At the very start of the *laus*, Vergil announces that the farmer's potential felicity is a function of his "knowledge (458–459):"

> O *fortunatos* nimium, sua si bona *norint*,[25]
> agricolas!
>
> *Blessed* are farmers—if they *come to understand* the basis of their happiness!

The idea of a state of happiness that is contingent on philosophical understanding is in perfect harmony with the portrait of the education of the ideal *puer* in *Ecl.* 4, which we have discussed above, pp. 67–68 (cp. *norint* and *cognoscere*). The inference to be drawn from the poet's insistence on knowledge of a non-material kind in both contexts is that there is an internal counterpart to an outward state of human felicity manifested in versions of a golden age existence.

The central concept of "knowledge" as a precondition for realizing happiness is conspicuously reiterated in the famous analogy that Vergil goes on to draw later in the same passage between the happy philosopher and the happy farmer (490–494):

> *felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*
> atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum
> subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis auari:
> *fortunatus* et ille deos qui *nouit* agrestis
> Panaque Siluanumque senem Nymphasque sorores.
>
> *Happy is the person who has been able to gain knowledge of the causes of things*, and has trampled beneath his feet all forms of fear and pitiless fate and the bedlam of greedy Acheron: *happy also is the person* who knows the gods of the countryside, Pan, and old Silvanus, and the sister Nymphs.[26]

The distinctly Epicurean color of the portrait of the happy philosopher who has triumphed over the fear of death by virtue of his deep knowledge of the nature of the universe has long been recognized—a color that is amplified by the patent parallels in Vergil's diction with the language of Epicurus' great Roman advocate, Lucretius. Vergil's general point, however, is by no means confined to the promulgation of a particular philosophical doctrine. If we accept the premise that the farmer represents mankind, then the

---

[25] I read the clause as a "future less vivid" protasis (cp. Thomas ad loc).

[26] As my translation reflects, I regard the adjectives *felix* and *fortunatus* in this context as virtual synonyms ("equipollent").

full realization of an ideal existence, in Vergil's thought, depends upon the acquisition of a proper knowledge of the nature of the things—a knowledge that includes a grasp of the nature of divinity.

In the representative passages from the *Georgics* we have examined, allusions to the schema of world-ages are circumscribed to two extreme *saecula*, viz. Golden and Iron. A fundamentally "circular" schema limited to two items can, without contradiction, be visualized as an alternation or oscillation; for the principle of recurrence remains the root idea that governs this temporal model. This twofold focus on Jovian/Iron and Saturnian/Golden states of existence, to the exclusion of other gradations (such as Silver and Bronze in the Hesiodic schema) is paralleled in the prophetic script in *Ecl.* 4. There the transition from Iron infelicity to Golden felicity (with its partial intermingling of features from both) constitutes the main vertebra of Vergil's prognosis of the ideal age to come. The mainly Italo-centric perspective of the *Georgics*, as we have seen, frequently treats "golden" and "iron" as tropes for idealized and degenerate eras, respectively, in a global master-narrative.

The aim of our lapidary overview of the leitmotif of successive world ages (and especially of the metonymic relation of Jovian "Iron" to Saturnian "Gold") as it is elaborated in the first two books of the *Georgics* has been to shed light on certain fundamental conceptions underlying the predicted rebirth of an *aurea aetas* in *Ecl.* 4. Among these is the notion that absolute, unalloyed, external felicity is not ultimately within the control of human agents on the world stage. As individual players on the scene, we are indeed capable of achieving a certain inner tranquility by a deep understanding of the nature of things ("felix qui potuit ..."). However, even the ideal ruler of divine provenance (the icon of *Ecl.* 4) must first acquire knowledge and ethical discrimination as a precondition of success ("quae sit ... cognoscere virtus"). *Eudaimonia*, for ruler or farmer alike, is contingent on insights gained through nurture and experience (cp. for the former, "qui non risere parenti;" for the latter, "sua si bona norint"). Earthly existence is defined by the parameters of an ineluctable vicissitude "writ large."

CHAPTER FIVE

COPING WITH DEATH: THE INTERPLAY OF LAMENT AND CONSOLATION IN *ECL.* 5

> We show our feelings for friends, not by lamentation [at their funerals] but by meditating [on their lives][1]
>
> *Gnom.Vat.* 66

> There are those who, like Epicurus, direct us away from misfortunes and redirect us towards felicity[2]
>
> Cicero

If the dominant leitmotif of the *Bucolics* as a whole is the predicament of acute loss (and the philosophical and psychological challenges it poses to those who experience it), then it should figure prominently in the eclogue that occupies the "center," or diachronic midpoint, of the Eclogue-book. By virtue of its placement in the sequence, then, the fifth eclogue has a plausible claim to being the "centerpiece" of the collection—[3]all the more so since it thematizes the death and transfiguration of Daphnis, the iconic figure who is the very archetype of the bucolic universe. The core of the poem, which consists in an exchange of songs of precisely equal length, is organized around contrasting—and complementary—responses on the part of two bucolic poets/musicians to the loss of the legendary founder of the genre. A pair of accomplished singers—the youthful Mopsus and the

[1] Συμπαθῶμεν τοῖς φίλοις οὐ θρηνοῦντες ἀλλὰ φροντίζοντες. *Gnom.Vat.* 66 (Arr). The collection *Gnomologium Vaticanum Epicureum* appears to belong to a genre of Epicurean writings put together by later adherents of the school. On the controversy relating to its provenance and authenticity, consult Arr., 505–506. The point of the Epicurean position is not to "forbid mourning", but to transcend it. See further note 25 below.

[2] Tusc. 3.31.76: "Sunt qui abducant a malis ad bona, ut Epicurus."

[3] 5 has also long been considered a "centerpiece" from the perspective of an arrangement of concentric pairs comprising 1–9 (see e.g. Otis[1964] 129] for diagram and exposition, with references to earlier literature on this "reciprocal pattern."). On the thematic import of 10 (excluded under this schema), see Jones (2011) 147.

aging Menalcas—perform compositions that reflect the dynamic interconnection between the discourses of lament and consolation. In examining the dialectical relationship between the two compositions, we hope to shed light on the poetic ideal represented by the figure of Daphnis.

It is intrinsic to the logic of consolatory rhetoric that it implies a necessary limit (*modus*) to the expression of grief or lament. The discourse of consolation begins to operate effectively precisely at the point where mourning comes to an end, since it is predicated on the very goal of relinquishing, and thereby transcending, sorrow. This basic dynamic is copiously illustrated in the vast literature of consolation in the Greco-Roman tradition in all genres, from Homer to Boethius and beyond.[4] The inherently dialectical relationship between lament and consolation—the transcendence of lament through a philosophical acceptance of extreme loss—is manifest in the twin poetic responses to the adversity of Daphnis' death.

In terms of a linear narrative sequence, the two songs strictly complement each other: in Song A (Mopsus') the death of Daphnis is mourned, while in Song B (Menalcas'), his resurrection is recounted. This diachronic continuity of plot (the actions in A are temporarily prior to those in B) is not matched in the sequence of composition of the two songs, as this is dramatized in the text. As Lee has pointed out in his brief introduction to his translation of the Eclogue,[5] the order of composition of the songs is the inverse of the order of the themes presented in the performances. Thus Mopsus claims to have composed his song recently (*nuper*: 13), whereas Menalcas's song—again according to Mopsus—has been in circulation for a long period of time (*iampridem*: 55). Thus the juxtaposition of the *carmina* on the occasion of the amoebean exchange has implications that are best understood on the paradigmatic plane: the resurrection motif functions as consolation (or compensation) for the untimely death of the culture hero.

If the Daphnis legend is provisionally accepted as archetypal for bucolic song ("l'archetypo bucolico universale"),[6] it follows that its major episodes should reflect the dominant thematic of the genre. Common to all the many variants of the mythical biography of Daphnis is his untimely and violent death[7]—hence the prevalence of the generic theme of the suffering

---

4 See Kassel (1958); Davis (1967).

5 Lee (1980) p. 60.

6 Cipolla (1984) points out that, since the name, Daphnis, occurs 34 times in the Bucolics, it is perhaps reductionist to identify Daphnis in this instance with Julius Caesar.

7 For summary accounts of the main variants of the myth, see especially Cipolla (1984); Gow: Vol. 2. 1–2; Lightfoot (1999) 526–530; Hunter, 60–68.

(*pathos*) of the bucolic hero. In the programmatic first Idyll of Theocritus, the embedded song of Thyrsis takes as its subject the pain and suffering (τὰ Δάφνιδος ἄλγεα)[8] of the musician-herdsman who is often credited with the invention of the genre. The prominently placed song is no less than a threnody in honor of the deceased Daphnis-figure. In the variant of the myth represented in Aelian, we are informed that the *pathos* of Daphnis provided the "hypothesis" (narrative *mythos*) of the genre as a whole.[9] In view of the primacy and putative antiquity of the theme, Mopsus' choice of topic for his opening performance is loaded with generic significance: the aspiring young poet fixes upon the canonic theme—the *pathos* of Daphnis—as a way of establishing his credentials with the initially skeptical older poet, Menalcas.

Mopsus' focus on the grand pathetic theme is preceded by a brief variation on the *recusatio* preamble, which here takes the form of the "rejection" of three bucolic subgenres in favor of the *epicedion* (funeral eulogy)—with the refinement that the three rejected options (erotic tales, encomium, detraction) have just been proposed by his opposite number, and presumptive competitor, Menalcas (10–11):

> Incipe, Mopse, prior, si quos aut Phyllidis ignis
> aut Alconis habes laudes aut iurgia Codri.
>
> Begin then, Mopsus, first, with, say, passion for Phyllis,[10] or praise of Alcon, or detraction of Codrus

Mopsus firmly sets aside all three generic options suggested by his interlocutor and goes on to signal the uncommon degree of pride he has taken in composing, no less than performing, his selected piece by asserting that he had recently taken care to inscribe it on the bark of a beech-tree (13–15):

> immo haec, in viridi nuper quae cortice fagi
> carmina descripsi et modulans alterna notavi
> experiar …
>
> No: instead I'll try out the song that I recently inscribed on the bark of a green beech-tree, marking down the musical interludes …

---

8 *Id.*1.19.

9 *VH* 10.18. Aelian attributes the founding of the genre (defined by its subject matter) to Stesichorus.

10 Clausen ad loc. points out that the term, "loves of Phyllis" (*Phyllidis ignes*), like the other two themes, employs the objective genitive ("desire for Phyllis"). On the nomenclature associated with these generic types, see Lipka, 184–190.

In the bantering dialogue between the poets/herdsmen that precedes the actual exchange of poems, the issue of the appropriate place of performance—the *locus* of bucolic song—is the subject of competitive negotiation. The contestation over the venue is a variation upon a Vergilian prologic device frequent in the Eclogue-book.[11] In the context of *Ecl.* 5, in particular, the motif sheds light on the scope of Mopsus' aspirations by the very resolution of the contest over choice of locus; for Menalcas, despite his initial invitation to stage the dual performance in a setting of "unstable shade" (*incertas umbras* is Mopsus' description of the offered site), eventually accedes to his interlocutor's express preference for the *antrum* (grotto). His acquiescence indicates his willingness to play along with the ambitious program of the younger musician (4–7; 19). Like the choice of lament over alternative genres, the choice of the performance site signifies Mopsus' burning desire to emulate master-singers of the past (symbolized by the *antrum*) and thereby impress the older, well-established singer. By insisting on the preferability of the grotto (and securing Menalcas' assent to his choice), Mopsus signals his programmatic intention of returning to a central thematic matrix of the genre: the threnody on the *pathos* of its founding figure. From his secured position in the *antrum* of pristine convention, he launches his bid to persuade the older poet of his competence and discernment, not the least aspect of which is his *inventio* (choice of theme) and his knowledge of the generic tradition. Though his song has purportedly been recently composed, its subject-matter is rigorously canonical.

The thematic choice, which is elaborately staged, appears all the more ambitious because Menalcas began the preludic exchange by first disparaging Mopsus' competence in song (*dicere versus*), as opposed to sheer musicianship on the pipe (*calamos inflare*) (1–3):

> Cur non, Mopse, boni quoniam convenimus ambo,
> tu calamos inflare levis, ego dicere versus
> hic corylis mixtas inter consedimus ulmos?

> Why don't we, Mopsus (seeing that we are both accomplished—you in blowing on the light reed-pipes, I in composing verses—) sit down together in this spot where hazels and elms are intermingled?

[11] The recurrent prologic motif of singers selecting the appropriate locus of bucolic performance is discussed below in connection with 2 (Chapter 6, p. 100).

After listening to Mopsus' stellar performance, however, Menalcas graciously concedes that the youthful performer is indeed equally adept at playing the pipe and composing/performing a song worthy of the *laudandus* (48–49):[12]

> nec *calamis* solum aequiperas, sed *uoce* magistrum:
> fortunate puer, tu nunc eris alter ab illo.

> You equal the master not only *in piping* but also *in singing*. Fortunate youth, you will now be his successor in rank.

The subject of Mopsus' song (20–44) may appropriately be accorded the label, "Lament for Daphnis." In its motif structure it follows the normal conventions of the *epicedion*—in particular, as they recur within the generic borders of bucolic verse.[13] After adumbrating these conventional elements in brief compass, we shall concentrate on those aspects of their subtext that point towards an implicit world-view. Our ultimate aim is to bring to the fore the subtle ways in which features of the lament foreshadow the philosophical slant that the rival song of Menalcas will take.

To begin with a sketch of the conventional elements: the lament focuses primarily on representing the extreme expression of grief on the part of the bereaved bucolic community. Thus his song predictably foregrounds the ritual lamentation of the next of kin, while emphasizing the special motives for pathos in the particular occasion: the cruel fate of the child who predeceases a parent (20–23):[14]

> Exstinctum Nymphae crudeli funere Daphnin
> flebant (vos coryli testes et flumina Nymphis),
> cum complexa sui corpus miserabile nati,
> atque deos atque astra vocat "crudelia" mater.

> The Nymphs raised a lament for Daphnis, extinguished by a cruel death (you hazels and rivers can vouch for the Nymphs), as the mother embraced the pitiful corpse of her son and called the gods and the stars "cruel."

---

12 The identity of the master-singer (*magister*) does not emerge clearly from the text. Coleman ad 48–49 opts, with some plausibility, for Daphnis. It is striking that Menalcas' compliments do not include the content of the song, merely the manner of its execution.

13 See Du Quesnay (1977) 23–29 for a thorough analysis of the bucolic *epicedion*. The antecedents of the lament theme in Bucolic verse include Theocr. *Id.* 1; Bion. 1.32; Mosch. 3.23. Gutzwiller (2007) 97, provides a useful summary of the vestiges of the subgenre.

14 See Lattimore (1962) 184–198 on the motif of premature death in the Greco-Roman epigraphic tradition.

Mopsus' lament deploys a central eulogy of the deceased (*laudatio funebris*), to which the singer imparts a distinctly hymnal color (29–34):[15]

> Daphnis et Armenias curru subiungere tigris
> instituit, Daphnis thiasos inducere Bacchi
> et foliis lentas intexere mollibus hastas.
> uitis ut arboribus decori est, ut uitibus uuae,
> ut gregibus tauri, segetes ut pinguibus aruis,
> tu decus omne tuis.

> Daphnis pioneered in yoking Armenian tigresses to the chariot; Daphnis in leading the bands of Bacchic devotees and in entwining tough spearshafts with tender foliage. As vines add luster to trees, as grape-clusters to vines, as bulls to herds, as crops to richly-yielding fields, so you add luster to your kinsfolk.

The eulogy magnifies the benefactions of Daphnis by attributing to him the introduction of Bacchic rites in addition to his traditional role as inventor of bucolic song. This praise of the deceased benefactor foreshadows the dominant theme that will structure the laudatory *carmen* of Menalcas: the elevation of the Bucolic hero to godhead.

From the perspective of the relation between lament and consolation, the most salient element of Mopsus' song is its focus on the *topos* of extravagant grief deployed by an impressive catalogue of mourners. As we have seen, Daphnis' semi-divine mother heads off the list of mourners (20–23), which eventually is extended to include no less exalted a figure than the god Apollo, who, as a divine poet-cowherd has impeccable credentials for the ritual occasion (35). The traditional motif "All Nature Mourns,"[16] which here features extravagant mourning on a grand, inclusive scale, is inherently threatening to humanity's very existence, since it leads to a cessation of the work vital to the survival of the natural order on which human life depends (24–26)

> non ulli pastos illis egere diebus
> frigida, Daphni, boves ad flumina; nulla neque amnem
> libavit quadripes nec graminis attigit herbam.

> No one in those days pastured their cattle and drove them to the cool waters of the river; no four-footed animals drank from the stream or touched a blade of grass.

---

[15] The anaphora of Daphnis in the context of a god's accomplishments imitates hymnal "Er-Styl."

[16] This hoary motif has roots in several Near Eastern mythological traditions (the repercussions on the natural order of the death of the vegetation god). See Berg, (1974) 15–22; Anderson (1993).

When the divinities Pales and Apollo desert the fields, there ensues widespread sterility and infecundity (34–39):

> postquam te fata tulerunt
> ipsa Pales agros atque ipse reliquit Apollo.
> grandia saepe quibus mandavimus hordea sulcis,
> infelix lolium et steriles nascuntur avenae;
> pro molli viola, pro purpureo narcisso
> carduus et spinis surgit paliurus acutis.

> after the fates bore you off, Pales herself and Apollo himself have abandoned the fields. In the furrows, to which we have often committed large barley plants, there grow hapless darnel and the sterile oat; in place of the tender violet and the bright-hued narcissus, there push up thistles and the paliurus with its sharp thorns.

The proximate cause of Daphnis' demise—the occasion for the *epicedion*—is not explicitly stated in the course of Mopsus' song. Despite the plurality of extant variants of the Daphnis myth, however, there recurs a common denominator at the level of narrative "functions":[17] the bucolic culture-hero's violent death is most frequently associated with erotic desire and consequent misadventure. One variant of his erotic infelicity that we find in Theocritus features a Daphnis who pines away from unrequited love (*Id.*7.72–77):[18]

> ὁ δὲ Τίτυρος ἐγγύθεν ᾀσεῖ
> ὥς ποκα τᾶς Ξενέας ἠράσσατο Δάφνις ὁ βούτας,
> χὠς ὄρος ἀμφεπονεῖτο καὶ ὡς δρύες αὐτὸν ἐθρήνευν
> Ἱμέρα αἵτε φύοντι παρ' ὄχθαισιν ποταμοῖο,
> εὖτε χιὼν ὥς τις κατετάκετο μακρὸν ὑφ' Αἷμον
> ἢ Ἄθω ἢ Ῥοδόπαν ἢ Καύκασον ἐσχατόωντα.

> And close at hand Tityrus shall sing how once Daphnis the neatherd loved Xenea, and how the hill was sorrowful about him and the oak trees which grew on the river Himera's banks sang his dirge, when he was wasting away like any snow under high Haemus or Athos or Rhodope or remotest Caucasus.

Though Vergil's embedded singers elide the actual form of death, there are clear indications in the text that an erotic *pathema*, whatever its instantiation in specific versions of the tale, is implicated in the unfortunate death of

---

17 The term is from the lexicon of Propp (1968). See also Lightfoot (1999) 237–240.

18 Text and translation of this passage are from Gow. The death "function" (in the Proppian sense) is variable across the mythographic variants: e.g drowning, blinding, suicide, homicide (see sources cited above, note 7).

the musician. The most egregious clue resides in the vocabulary of Daphnis' epitaph, which provides the cadence of Mopsus' encomium. Mopsus transmits the text of the epigraph, as mandated by the dying Daphnis, which is to be incised on his tomb (40–44)

> spargite humum foliis, inducite fontibus umbras,
> pastores (mandat fieri sibi talia Daphnis),
> et tumulum facite, et tumulo superaddite carmen:
> 'Daphnis ego in siluis, hinc usque ad sidera notus,
> formosi pecoris custos, formosior ipse.'
>
> sprinkle the ground with petals, spread abundant shade[19] on the fountains, shepherds (Daphnis enjoins these rites to be performed for him), and make a mound, and over it inscribe the epitaph: 'Daphnis I am, laureate of the woods, renowned from here all the way to the stars, herdsman of a handsome flock, myself more handsome,'

The epithet, *formosus* ("handsome"), which appears twice (in its positive and comparative forms) in the final hexameter of the distich, carries distinctly erotic connotations in Latin poetry and is virtually the semantic equivalent of the Greek *kalos*.[20] It is not without significance that most, if not all, of the extant Daphnis legends attest to the extraordinary physical attractiveness of the poet-herdsman. As the offspring of a nymph he is endowed with exceptional beauty that marks him out as the object of sexual desire. As often with figures so marked, his ultimate destiny is "dyserotic" (entraining an infelicitous course and final outcome in amatory matters). What the epigraph reveals in addition, however, is that he is to receive compensation/consolation for this catastrophic end in the form of a "stellar" reputation (*usque ad sidera notus*: "renowned all the way to the stars").

The renown of Daphnis during his lifetime is by no means confined to his consummate physical beauty and his fatal attractiveness. The tradition that he was a peerless musician, a virtuoso of the pan-pipes, is well established in both the textual (mythographic) and in visual representations.[21] We should therefore read into the participle *notus* ("renowned"), as it appears in the epitaph in an emphatic position at the end of the verse, an oblique allu-

---

19 *Umbrae* (shades) is here metonomy for "branches that provide shade."

20 Cp. Plato: *Lysis* 203B. There is more than a hint of arrogance in Daphnis' boasting of his physical beauty—a motif that is well documented by Anderson (1963) in the context of the use of *forma* and its cognates in Ovid's love-narratives.

21 Cp. the famous sculpture by Heliodorus (c. 100 BCE) of Pan instructing Daphnis on the syrinx in the Museo Archeologico Nationale di Napoli (used as frontispiece in Hubbard [1998]). See also Coleman on lines 43–44.

sion to Daphnis' accomplishments as a poet-musician. The boastful self-description has a double valence that we may capture in the formulation, "handsome virtuoso."

An important premiss of our investigation is that poetry, in the Vergilian practice, is inextricably linked with philosophy. The burden of our argument is that Bucolic poetry is no exception. In considering the part played by Eros in this conceptualization, the nexus between poetry and philosophy is, in my view, to be discerned in the famous valedictory to his circle of fellow-students that is pronounced by the speaker of *Catalepton* 5 (6–10) as he departs for philosophical study in the bay of Naples at the feet of the Epicurean teacher/philoshopher, Siro:[22]

> tuque, o mearum cura, Sexte, curarum,
> vale, Sabine; iam valete, *formosi*.
> nos ad beatos vela mittimus portus
> magni petentes docta dicta Sironis
> vitamque ab omni vindicabimus cura.

> And you, Sextus Sabinus, so dear to my heart, farewell! Farewell, all you *handsome friends*. We are spreading our sail for blessed ports in pursuit of great Siro's learned words and will lay claim to a life free of anxiety.

In this passage it is noteworthy that the epithet *formosus* is applied, in its plural form, to a group of young fellow students of rhetoric. The designation of the band of *discipuli* as *formosi* (*kaloi*) may be evocative of the notion of a pedagogically enhancing *Eros* that is most famously articulated by the Diotimus-persona in Plato's *Symposium*. In the context of *Ecl.* 5, the reiterated epithet, *formosus*, so prominently crystallized in the epitaph of Daphnis, may be heard as an allusion to the shared passion for poetry that defines the ideal bucolic community of which Daphnis is the legendary avatar.

When it is Menalcas' turn to perform in the exchange, he chooses a theme that is also an encomium of Daphnis, but one with a radically different, even antithetical, orientation. He signals his intention to go beyond *epicedion* to hymnal deification in a prelude to his song (50–53):

> Nos *tamen* haec quocumque modo tibi nostra vicissim
> dicemus, Daphninque tuum tollemus ad astra;
> Daphnin ad astra feremus: amavit nos quoque Daphnis.

---

[22] The poem is accepted by many scholars as of Vergilian authorship, though of course the attribution cannot be definitely established. See Clay (2004) for the poet's double allegiance to poetry and philosophy. On Vergil's youthful adherence to Epicureanism, the brief sketch in Castner (1988) 77–79 is useful, though now outdated.

> I, *however*, in my turn, shall perform for you this song, such as it is, and I shall elevate your beloved Daphnis to the stars; I shall transport Daphnis to the stars: Daphnis did love me also.[23]

The antithesis in the approach to eulogy is flagged by the salient adversative, *tamen* ("however"). As Menalcas' song ("this contribution of mine" [*haec nostra*]) unfolds, the singers' contrasting strategies become more marked at the level of underlying philosophical perspectives, for whereas Mopsus' song focused exclusively on acute loss (the death of Daphnis and the intense grief that it unleashed among the bucolic community), Menalcas' composition offers supreme consolation for that traumatic event. The latter's "consolation of immortality"[24] counter-balances, and compensates for, the extreme deprivation caused by the demise of the charismatic founder. The narrative orientations of the two *carmina* (death in A followed by apotheosis in B) should not blind us to the intrinsic *tension* that exists below the surface between the two modalities of praise. According to the inner logic of the binary sequence, the second song implicitly transcends the first, for, as we observed above, the ethical goal of consolatory rhetoric is to impose a limit (*modus*) upon the very expression of grief, thereby in effect trumping it.[25] Inherent in the antinomy, lament/consolation, then, is an interplay of ideas regarding human mortality: in the threnodic mode, death is overvalued, while in consolatory discourse death is transparently devalued. The "consolation of immortality" has the effect *ipso facto* of negating death.

Before expanding on the philosophical dimension of this devaluation of death, it will be useful briefly to observe the subtle way in which the bucolic dialogue reflects the underlying tension we have described. The rhetorical technique Vergil employs to encode the tension is apparent in the comment that each singer makes on the performance of the other. In both of these pronounced judgments on the part of the competing singers there is a hint of "faint praise" masquerading as high compliment, for as Lee, in particular, has pointed out, there may be a slightly sardonic note in the exchange of polite compliments. Thus after Mopsus' poetic effort, Menalcas makes a double comparison in describing his pleasure at its reception (45–47):

---

[23] The notion of an *amor* that is linked to poetic activity—sometimes in the figurative sense of "passion for poetry" is discussed below, Chapter 7, pp. 126–128.

[24] See Lattimore (1962) 21–65; 258–265.

[25] Excessive mourning is most conspicuously embodied in the myth of Orpheus, in which the singer is unable to set a limit to his grief. For the lyric perspective on the necessity of limiting mourning, see the discussion in Davis (1991) 50–57 apropos of Horace, *C.* 2.9.

> Tale tuum carmen nobis, divine poeta,
> quale sopor fessis in gramine, quale per aestum
> dulcis aquae saliente sitim restinguere rivo.

> Your song, in my estimation, divine poet, is like sleep for the weary in a grassy meadow, or like slating one's thirst from a leaping stream of sweet water.

Whether or not one accepts Lee's reading of an ironic note into the phrase "divine poeta" (on the grounds that the over-confident Mopsus had previously put his art implicitly on a par with that of god Apollo),[26] it is pertinent to ask what *type* of pleasure is being invoked in the seemingly innocent twin comparisons. An intriguing answer is provided by the context of Epicurean discourse on the subject of hierarachies of pleasure. Without expatiating on the niceties of the scholarly debate surrounding what constitutes optimum pleasure in the Epicurean system for humans in search of happiness, it is well known that the founder made an important distinction between "static" and "kinetic" pleasures.[27] Under this dual typology, freedom from physical pain falls under the "static" label, while joy and delight are of the "kinetic" sort. There is also a broad dichotomy to be observed between the instant fulfillment of bodily cravings and the long-term cure of mental distress; for "according to the Epicureans, the pleasures of the body are limited and easily obtained."[28] In the case of Menalcas' comparisons, sleep (*sopor*) puts an end to the pain of extreme fatigue, while drinking water from a stream on a hot day satisfies the craving of thirst. The similes are revealing: the pleasure afforded by Mopsus' song is made analogous to those brought on by the cessation of discomfort once a corporeal desire has been fulfilled. That Menalcas probably has a hierarchical notion in mind in regard to the quality of pleasure he has experienced in listening to Mopsos' words is more clearly disclosed in his own rival song, in which a very "kinetic" form of pleasure (*alacris voluptas*) is experienced by animate beings as soon as the apotheosis of Daphnis has occurred (56–59):

> Candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi
> sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera Daphnis
> ergo *alacris* silvas et cetera rura *voluptas*
> Panaque pastoresque tenet Dryadasve puellas.

[26] Lee (1977) p. 66.

[27] The chief source for ascribing the distinction to Epicurus is *DL* 10.136. Cp. the exposition and critique of the concept by Cicero in *Tusc.* 5.33.93 and *De Fin.* 2.9. See further Woolf (2009) 170–172; Brown (1987) 104–105.

[28] The quotation is from Smith (1979), p. 77, ad lines 5–10, where several Epicurean sources are cited (e.g. *Ep. Men.* 130; *Gnom. Vat* 15; 21).

> Shining Daphnis[29] admires the unfamiliar threshold of Olympus and sees clouds and stars beneath his feet. Therefore *a keen pleasure* takes hold of the woods and the rest of the country, as well as Pan, the shepherds and the Dryads.

The conspicuously placed *ergo* (*therefore*) emphasizes the unforced, spontaneous nature of the outburst of the *voluptas* in question. As Alfonsi eloquently remarks: "The arrival of Daphnis in the sky is counter-signed by the dominion of *voluptas* on the earth."[30] *Voluptas* has an important pedigree in Epicurean thought, most conspicuously as that term from the philosophical lexicon is paraded in the proem to the *DRN*, where it is appears in the opening line in apposition to the goddess, Venus ("hominum divomque voluptas"), "the personification of the Epicurean *summum bonum*."[31]

When it is his turn to return the compliment, Mopsus has this to say regarding the effect produced by the older poet's effusion (81–84):

> Quae tibi, quae tali reddam pro carmine dona?
> nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus Austri
> nec percussa iuvant fluctu tam litora, nec quae
> saxosas inter decurrunt flumina vallis.

> What gift can I give you in exchange for such a song? For neither the whistling of the approaching South Wind pleases me so much, nor the coasts being battered by the waves, nor the rivers as they rush down among rocky valleys.

Mopsus' ironic notes in his compliment are more overt than those of Menalcas, for despite the former's claim to have received pleasure (cp. *iuvant*) from his interlocutor's *carmen*, it is hard to imagine the sinister blowing of Auster, or the sound of waves battering the shore as conducive to enjoyment, rather than apprehension, if not outright displeasure. The mutual congratulations expressed by the older and younger performers conceal a subtext of grudging, qualified admiration. The tension in the voices is to be ascribed, in my view, not merely to the conventional framework of competition between singers that is the hallmark of bucolic exchange, but also to the ideational content—what I have called the differing philosophical perspectives—exemplified in the motifs of the two songs.

---

[29] "Candidus," as Coleman points out ad loc., refers to the radiant appearance of a new constellation.

[30] Alfonsi (1959) p. 172: "L'arrivo di Dafni in cielo è contrassegnato dal dominio della *voluptas* in terra."

[31] The phrase is from Smith (1982), p. 3. Note a.

The most pertinent context for understanding the "Epicurean color"[32]— of Menalcas's song is the observation that the piece is penetrated with "systematic allusions" to Lucretius' poem.[33] These prominent allusions are by no means otiose "echoes," rather they encode the philosophical subtext of the embedded song and thereby furnish significant clues regarding its motif structure. The most important of this nexus of allusions consists in the lines that explicitly identify the divine status of Daphnis (62–64):

> ipsi laetitia uoces ad sidera iactant
> intonsi montes; ipsae iam carmina rupes,
> ipsa sonant arbusta: *'deus, deus ille, Menalca!'*
>
> In their joy even the unshorn mountains hurl their voices to the stars; even the rocks, even the orchards repeat the sound: "*A god, a god is he, Menalcas!*"

The main Lucretian intertext comes from the proem to Bk. 5, a rhapsodic encomium to Epicurus that opens with a brief *recusatio* (generic disavowal) intended to magnify the *laudandus* (1–6):

> Quis potis est dignum pollenti pectore carmen
> condere pro rerum maiestate hisque repertis?
> quisve valet verbis tantum, qui fingere laudes
> pro meritis eius possit, qui talia nobis
> pectore parta suo quaesitaque praemia liquit?
> nemo, ut opinor, erit mortali corpore cretus.
>
> Who is capable by power of the mind to construct a poem worthy to match the majesty of nature's truth and these discoveries? Or who is so formidable in verbal art as to fashion praises commensurate with the merits of the man who has bequeathed us such rewards, sought and obtained by his own intellect? No one, in my view, who has been born of mortal stock.

This apologetic disavowal is followed by lines that assert the ineffable divinity of Epicurus (7–12):

> nam si, ut ipsa petit maiestas cognita rerum,
> dicendum est, *deus ille fuit, deus, inclute Memmi*,
> qui princeps vitae rationem invenit eam quae

[32] Alfonsi (1961) p. 172 felicitously describes the apotheosis of Daphnis as imparting "una divina felicità di colore epicureo" ("a divine felicity of Epicurean color") to the song of Menalcas.

[33] The phrase is from Lipka p. 80. See his excellent analysis of Vergilian adaptations of Lucretian passages on pp. 68–80. There are useful, though less fine-grained, discussions of Lucretian "echoes" and "parallels" in earlier literature by Merrill (1919), Mizera (1982), Castelli (1966) and Alfonsi (1959).

nunc appellatur sapientia, quique per artem
fluctibus e tantis vitam tantisque tenebris
in tam tranquillo et tam clara luce locavit.

For if we are to speak in accordance with the majesty of the truth that has been revealed to us, then *he was a god, yes a god, noble Memmius*, who was the first to discover that principle of life, which is now called wisdom, and who by his skill removed human life from its oppressively dark abode and relocated it in a realm suffused with light and tranquility.

It is by no means coincidental that the portrayal of the apotheosis of Daphnis in Menalcas' song draws on the same intertext as that of the apotheosis of the young ruler (Octavian) in the eulogy of Tityrus in *Ecl.* 1, which we analysed in Ch.2 (above pp. 20–23; 37–38). Both encomia in "hymnal style" establish a motif parallel with the divinization of the philosopher, Epicurus, in the Lucretian proem. What are the inferences to be drawn from this conspicuous parallel in regard to the enfolding lyric argument of *Ecl.* 5? The crucial element that the two Vergilian allusions possess in common with the Lucretian encomium is the notion that apotheosis is conferred on the human *laudandi* as just reward for their benefactions to humanity. For Lucretius, it is, of course, the philosophy of Epicurus that constitutes the supreme meritorious benefaction. In the case of Menalcas' eulogy of Daphnis, the precious gift that justifies his elevation to godhead is the invention of the bucolic way of life. In both cases, the blessings bestowed by the culture-hero upon a grateful mankind are compared specifically with those wrought by Bacchus and Ceres (*DRN* 5.13–15):

Confer enim divina aliorum antiqua reperta.
namque Ceres fertur fruges Liberque liqouris
vitigeni laticem mortalibus instituisse.

Compare, if you will, the ancient discoveries of other benefactors that have been regarded as divine: for Ceres is said to have instituted corn cultivation for mortals, and Bacchus the liquor of juice born of the grape.

Lucretius goes on to state that these blessings pale before that of the Epicurean philosophy and the "sweet consolations" it provides (18–21):

at bene non poterat sine puro pectore vivi;
quo magis hic merito nobis deus esse videtur,
ex quo nunc etiam per magnas didita gentis
dulcia permulcent animos *solacia vitae*.

yet a good life was not possible without a cleansed mind—all the more reason, in my view, to regard him as a god. Thanks to his dispensation, now widely distributed even among great peoples, *sweet consolations for life* soothe our minds.

In the Bucolic inflexion of *Ecl.* 5, the blessings of Daphnis afford a nexus of pleasurable (and consoling) activities to a community that now enjoys *eudaimonia*. Iconic among those pleasures are symposia (*convivia*: 69) and enthusiastic participation in ceremonial annual rites at the twin altars of the founder, Daphnis, conjoined with those of Apollo. The highpoint of these observances is the devotees' freedom, contingent upon Daphnis' continually favorable disposition, to enjoy the *otium* that provides the occasion for the periodic bucolic song-exchanges in convivial settings (65–73):

> sis bonus o felixque tuis! en quattuor aras:
> ecce duas tibi, Daphni, duas altaria Phoebo.
> pocula bina nouo spumantia lacte quotannis
> craterasque duo statuam tibi pinguis oliui,
> et multo in primis hilarans conuiuia Baccho
> (ante focum, si frigus erit; si messis, in umbra)
> uina nouum fundam calathis Ariusia nectar.
> cantabunt mihi Damoetas et Lyctius Aegon;
> saltantis Satyros imitabitur Alphesiboeus.

> May you favor your folk and bring them prosperity! Here are four altars: two for you, Daphnis, and two sacred to Phoebus. I shall set up every year two goblets each, foaming with fresh milk, and two plump bowls of olive oil. And to top it off: enlivening the banquets with generous Bacchic draughts (by the hearth, if it is cold; in the shade, if it is harvest-time), I shall pour the fresh nectar of Ariusian wine from large bowls. Damoetas and Lyctian Aegon will sing for my pleasure; Alphesiboeus will perform the Satyrs' dance.

The joyous, celebratory accent of Menalcas' *carmen* is fundamentally congruent with an Epicurean consolatory discourse that is predicated on the overriding principle that death provides a release from pain.[34] This is particularly pertinent to the life-course of Daphnis, which, as we have noted above, was represented in the Bucolic transmission as encompassing severe pain and distress, as is manifest most starkly in the prototype of Theocritus *Id.*1, where the topic of Thyrsis' song is given as "ta Daphnidis algea" ("the sufferings of Daphnis"). Hence even without his eventual apotheosis, the loss sustained by the Bucolic community through his demise can be received notionally as a gain to the deceased; with its cancellation in apotheosis, the catastrophic demise proves to be a boon to the community as well, since the posthumous benefactions become institutionalized (and remembered in ritual), while the *deus* can continue to bestow them in the

[34] Kassel (1958) 29–32.

future as long as he is *bonus* (of favorable disposition) towards the bucolic celebrants of his *numen*. In deliberate contradistinction to the stance chosen by Mopsus, then, the pivotal moment in Menalcas' effusion consists in the explosion of joy (*laetitia*: 62) on the part of the animate world—a joy occasioned by the divinization of the founder/culture-hero. The emphasis of his entire contribution is on the *recollection* of the blessings and benefactions of Daphnis—the gain that compensates for the acute loss. Both encomiastic *carmina*, then, commemorate Daphnis, but the crucial disparity between them lies in the choice of the pleasurable (*to charton*) versus the painful (*to luperon*) aspects of the hero's biography that each poet takes as his thematic focus.[35]

As Du Quesnay especially has pointed out in his useful analysis of the treatment of the Daphnis-figure among Vergil's generic predecessors,[36] the motif of the elevation of Daphnis to divine status appears to have been an invention of the author of the Eclogues. In that sense, Menalcas' song can be read as an attempt to transcend the conventional and trite legacy of "lament" that had become central to the Bucolic thematic surrounding the Daphnis-figure. In surpassing Mopsus in the sphere of *content* (rather than in musical or technical skill in performance), the mature older singer is also made to promote the Vergilian renewal of the genre. It is this aspect of his poetic *emulatio* that most adequately explains the symbolism in the exchange of gifts that concludes *Ecl.* 5 (85–90):

> [MEN.] Hac te nos fragili donabimus ante cicuta;
> haec nos 'formosum Corydon ardebat Alexin',
> haec eadem docuit 'cuium pecus? an Meliboei?'
> [MOP.] At tu sume pedum, quod, me cum saepe rogaret,
> non tulit Antigenes (et erat tum dignus amari),
> formosum paribus nodis atque aere, Menalca.

> [MEN.] Our gift to you will be this slim hemlock pipe; This instrument taught us: 'Corydon burned with passion for Alexis'; as well as: 'Whose flock? is it Meliboeus'?' [MOP.] In exchange take this crook, which, though he repeatedly asked for it, Antigenes did not succeed in getting (and he was very lovable in those days): a handsome piece, with matching knobs and brass sheath, Menalcas.

[35] In Epicurean thought, it is axiomatic that memory of past experiences follows a bifurcated schema: *past pleasures* recalled cancel out *present pain*. Among many loci that articulate this schema, see the much-restored fragment from *On Nature*: Arr. 31.18 (= Pap. Herc. 1056, 6 III. 1–4).

[36] Du Quesnay (1979), p. 30 on "the new Daphnis."

Mopsus' gift of the shepherd's crook may be taken as emblematic of the stock-in-trade of traditional threnody exemplified in his *carmen*; whereas the pipe transmitted by Menalcas, by contrast, embodies (through the auto-citations of Vergil's own poetry)[37] the originality of the Latin poet's deep transformation of the genre of Bucolic—a transformation that engages, *inter alia*, with the idea of providing a broader, philosophical perspective on the finality of death. The immature Mopsus is thereby encouraged to pay attention to innovation, no less than to tradition.

The embedded song of Menalcas justifies, by its implicit world-view, the well-documented Epicurean notion of a "therapeutic" function of ideas as a way of overcoming an acute sense of loss (as succinctly expressed in the first epigraph, attributed to Epicurus, affixed to this chapter). In the fragmentary remains of Philodemus' treatise on death,[38] we are afforded more than a glimpse of the standard Epicurean view on the devaluation of the phenomenon of mortality. The devaluation of death is an antidote (*pharmakon*) available to the bereaved when confronted with catastrophe (*symphora*). Epicurus' therapeutic remedy to the pain of deprivation ("die Therapie acuter Fälle")[39] was to concentrate on happy recollection of past experiences. In a passage that compares the differing consolatory therapies advocated by rival schools of philosophy, Cicero mentions Epicurus as being among those who advocated our turning our thoughts away from misfortunes and towards felicity (*Tusc.* 3.15.33):[40]

> Levationem autem aegritudinis in duabus rebus ponit
> [Epicurus]: avocatione a cogitanda molestia et
> recovatione ad contemplandas voluptates. [...]

> [Epicurus] posits a dual strategy for the alleviation of distress: calling the mind away [*avocatione*] from a focus on troubling events and recalling it [*revocatione*] to the meditation of pleasures [*voluptates*] [...]

---

37 The much-discussed auto-citations of Vergilian Bucolic (the opening lines or incipits of 1 and 3) underscore, not the supposed "identification" of Menalcas with Vergil, but the nature and scope of the Vergilian contribution to the genre. On the Theocritean affinities of the gift-exchange, see Coleman on lines 88 and 89. The crook as a token of authenticity may well go back to Hesiod (on which see Hunter [1999] 149–150).

38 Gigante (1983), 114–234. The famous Epicurean formulation of the "four-part cure" (*tetrapharmakon*) encapsulates the notion of securing a comprehensive antidote to anxiety that is productive of true pleasure. Cp. D.S. Hutchinson's remarks in the introduction to Inwood et al (1994) p. vii.

39 The phrase is from Kassel (1958), p. 31.

40 Later in the same context (*Tusc.*3.31.76), Cicero provides a more nuanced account of the Epicurean position on the ethical dynamics of lament/consolation in relation to those of other prominent schools of thought: Stoics (with discriminations between major thinkers, Peripatetics, Cyrenaics and Academicis).

Coming after the lament of Mopsus, Menalcas' song fully succeeds in drawing us away from the pain of acute loss and refocuses our minds on the contemplation of the hero's apotheosis and the blessings and pleasures it has engendered, and will continue to engender, in the future. His *laudatio* of Daphnis relies fundamentally upon the therapeutic strategy encapsulated in the teaching of Epicurus quoted as an epigraph to this chapter: "we show our feelings for friends, not by lamentation [at their funerals] but by meditating [on their lives]."

Menalcas' thematic shift from Bucolic lamentation to Bucolic celebration is not meant to denigrate the appropriate expression of grief *per se* on the part of the bereaved, or the younger singer's skillful representation of that grief. We have Plutarch's testimony of a lost letter of consolation written by Epicurus in which he gives express approval to the appropriate expression of grief on the part of the deceased family and community—an approval not inconsistent with the core precept that pity for the dead is, at bottom, irrational.[41] It is only at the analytical level of underlying attitudes to death that celebration may be parsed as superior to mourning, for the desirability of imposing a limit (*modus*) on threnody and grieving comes into play only at the point where the latter reaches an extreme. Here the archetype of excess is the singer/musician Orpheus who was famously incapable of relinquishing his intense grief at the death of Eurydice.

How does the implied challenge to tradition in the interplay of ideas between Mopsus and Menalcas on the latent issue of attitudes to death relate to the topic of vicissitude that we have proposed as a leitmotif of the Eclogue-book? The idea of the potential *reversibility* of death lies at the very core of the discourse on loss and consolation that is, in my account, a major preoccupation of the Bucolic universe as portrayed throughout the Eclogues. While this reversibility (in the form of apotheosis) is strictly available only to the privileged few (such as the historical Octavian of *Ecl.* 1 or the legendary Daphnis of *Ecl.* 5), it is nonetheless, at bottom, a feature of popular belief in the privileged afterlife of benefactors.[42] In so far as death proves to be reversible, immortalization restores the principle of vicissitude through the instrument of song and the crucial agency of poets. As Menalcas

---

[41] See Fr. 46 Arr; Fr. 120 Us. Cp. also the pertinent remarks in Smith (1979) p. 79. On the subject of the irrationality of expressing pity for the dead, see Lucretius 3. 894–911; *Gnom. Vat.* 40.

[42] Obbink (1989), p. 199 touches on the Euhemerist aspect of the deification of Epicurus. For a short list of traditionally deified benefactors in Latin literataure, see Syndikus (2001) 37–39.

proudly proclaims: “semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt” (“For all time your honor and your reputation and your accolades will endure.”) Paradoxically, however, the triumphant change from mortal to god also puts an end to the eternal alternation or cyclicality[43] that is the essence of vicissitude, since the attainment of divine status removes the recipient into a realm untainted forever by misfortune and unhappiness.

[43] It is important to note, however, that “resurrection gods” like Adonis and Osiris remain part of the cycle of periodical death and rebirth (the cycle itself being eternal). There are forms of immortality (most conspicuously represented in Ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian mythological traditions) that incorporate the very principle of alternation (vicissitude).

CHAPTER SIX

COPING WITH EROTIC ADVERSITY: *CARMEN ET AMOR* (*ECL.* 2 & 8)

> Virgil's Shepherds are too well read in the Philosophy of Epicurus and of Plato.
>
> Dryden: Preface to *Sylvae*

> Unde est haec, inquam, fatis avolsa voluntas
> per quam progredimur quo ducit quemque voluptas
>
> Lucretius[1]

In our ongoing examination of the central theme of "coping with adversity" in the Eclogues we have so far considered the various reactions of bucolic personae to the traumas of dislocation (*Ecl.* 1 and *Ecl.* 9) and of a benefactor's death (*Ecl.* 5). In *Ecl.* 9, as we have seen in Ch.3, the catastrophe of dispossession is conjoined with the threat of death against the poets/herdsmen, Menalcas and Moeris, and the efforts of the singers (led by Lycidas) are concentrated on the potentially consolatory function of poetry. In succeeding chapters, we shall shift attention to the all-important domain of erotic experience (*amor*) and apply a similar set of questions to those that have shaped our discussion up to this point: what inner resources do the different personae draw upon in order to mitigate or transcend amatory infelicity, and what are the intrinsic limitations of those resources?

We begin with an analysis of *Ecl.* 2, which takes the form of a monologue delivered by a distressed poet-herdsman, Corydon, who is experiencing the pain of rejection by his beloved (*amatus*). The song of the aggrieved *amator* is preceded by a brief prelude in the voice of the narrator that introduces the players in an erotic triangle and sets the stage for the ensuing soliloquy (1–5):

> Formosum pastor Corydon ardebat Alexin,
> delicias domini, nec quid speraret habebat.
> tantum inter densas, umbrosa cacumina, fagos

[1] *DRN* 2.257–258: "From where, I ask, is this free volition, torn from the grip of the fates, by which we proceed wherever our pleasure leads us …?"

adsidue ueniebat. ibi haec incondita solus
montibus et siluis studio iactabat inani.

The shepherd, Corydon, burned with desire for handsome Alexis, his master's favorite, nor did he have anything to hope for. Still he'd come and go repeatedly among the densely packed beech-trees, shady canopies. There all alone he would toss off these disjointed songs with empty zeal to the woods and mountains.

The first two lines succinctly set forth the subject of an extreme desire (*ardor*) that is unreciprocated ("nec quid speraret habebat"). The description we are given of the place of performance foregrounds certain disquieting aspects that render it anomalous in respect to the typical bucolic *locus* and prepares the reader for the subsequent treatment of erotic passion as fundamentally pathological. To begin with, the super-abundance of shade ("inter densas, umbrosa cacumina, fagos") is more portentously cloying than inviting; for the ideal performance-site requires but a single beech-tree with adequate shade, such as we are shown, for instance, in the programmatic first eclogue ("sub tegmine fagi"). For his repeated outpourings in song, Corydon chooses a site that features a proliferation of beeches and a corresponding superfluity of shade. As we have observed above (p. 82), the recurrent motif of *choice of locus* is metonymically related to the content of the *carmina* that it engenders. Corydon's choice of immoderate *umbra* (the densely-packed beeches) is one to which he obsessively returns (*adsidue veniebat*). Furthermore, the very songs that he projects over and over again (*iactabat*) to his audience of mountains and woods are characterized as "disjointed" (*incondita*)[2] as well as inefficacious (*studio ... inani*). No less ominous are the circumstances of the agonizing and fruitless rehearsal that registers Corydon's *aporia*. The singer is isolated (*solus*) and is represented as constantly restless and on the move, rather than recumbent and relaxed. The latent contrast with the reclining singer of *Ecl.* 1 (*recubans*) could not be more pronounced.

When Corydon, whose *nome parlante* ("significant name") denotes "lark," unleashes a sample of his reiterated *carmina*, we receive further coded indications of his disharmonious relation to the bucolic ambiance (8–13):[3]

[2] Opinions differ regarding the precise connotations of *incondita*. See Coleman ad loc.

[3] For a thorough and compelling analysis of the etymology of the name and the type of lark involved see Lipka, 178–181. Cp. his paraphrase (loc. cit.) of the closing line of 7.70: "ex illo Corydon/Corydon est tempore nobis" ["Since that time the lark has been a 'Corydon' (i.e. the best singer among the birds) for me"].

> nunc etiam pecudes umbras et frigora captant,
> nunc uiridis etiam occultant spineta lacertos,
> Thestylis et rapido fessis messoribus aestu
> alia serpyllumque herbas contundit olentis.
> at mecum raucis, tua dum uestigia lustro,
> sole sub ardenti resonant arbusta cicadis.
>
> Now even the cattle seek out cool and shady places; now even green lizards hide among thorn-bushes; Thestylis also is pounding, for the reapers worn out from the scorching heat, pungent herbs, a mess of thyme and garlic. But I, while closely following your tracks, for accompaniment have only the strident cicadas that make the vineyards resound under the blazing sun.

Whereas the narrator had focused on the extravagant and incongruous features in the chosen site, the singer himself is obsessed with the disparities manifest in the temporal, no less than spatial, conditions of performance. The dissonance between singer and the occasion of performance derives from the failure of the *amatus* to follow the lead of the animals (flocks of cattle; lizards) in seeking shade at the very moment (noon) when it would be most desirable and refreshing. Other human inhabitants (*messores*: peasant harvesters) are portrayed as retiring from the midday heat to enjoy a modest repast (10–11), in stark contrast to the embedded singer, whose own music is accompanied, on the hot periphery of his cool locus, by the strident voices of cicadas.[4] The motif of the restlessness of the performer is repeated ("tua dum vestigia lustro").

Corydon's anguished monologue is modeled on the complaint of the Cyclops, Polyphemus, in Theocritus' caricature of the rejected lover in *Id.* 11.[5] Rather than giving a close diachronic account of the parallel *topoi* enunciated by Vergil's *amator*, I shall focus on those elements in Corydon's *carmen* that bear directly on the issue of his pathological mental state and the path to its alleviation, if not cure. *Id.* 11 opens with a prelude that places the subject of erotic pathology and a route to potential therapy in the forefront of the poem (lines 1–18):[6]

---

[4] The word *mecum* has elicited conflicting interpretations. I take it to refer to the "accompaniment" (in a musical sense) provided by the cicadas, who are situated on the margins of the *umbra* under the hot sun. A common received opinion would locate Corydon *sole sub ardenti*, but since he has already positioned himself *inter densas … umbras*, the cicadas are best imagined as singing in incongruous accompaniment from the blazing periphery. It is worth noting that at Theocr. *Id.*16.94–96 the cicadas are portrayed as singing from the trees while the herdsmen are situated in the sun.

[5] For parallels and divergences between intertext and Vergilian imitation, see Lipka 32–37.

[6] Citations of Theocritus follow the text of Gow.

Οὐδὲν ποττὸν ἔρωτα πεφύκει φάρμακον ἄλλο,
Νικία, οὔτ' ἔγχριστον, ἐμὶν δοκεῖ, οὔτ' ἐπίπαστον,
ἢ ταὶ Πιερίδες· κοῦφον δέ τι τοῦτο καὶ ἁδὺ
γίνετ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώποις, εὑρεῖν δ' οὐ ῥᾴδιόν ἐστι.
γινώσκειν δ' οἶμαί τυ καλῶς ἰατρὸν ἐόντα
καὶ ταῖς ἐννέα δὴ πεφιλημένον ἔξοχα Μοίσαις.
οὕτω γοῦν ῥάιστα διᾶγ' ὁ Κύκλωψ ὁ παρ' ἁμῖν,
ὡρχαῖος Πολύφαμος, ὅκ' ἤρατο τᾶς Γαλατείας,
ἄρτι γενειάσδων περὶ τὸ στόμα τὼς κροτάφως τε.
ἤρατο δ' οὐ μάλοις οὐδὲ ῥόδῳ οὐδὲ κικίννοις,
ἀλλ' ὀρθαῖς μανίαις, ἁγεῖτο δὲ πάντα πάρεργα.
πολλάκι ταὶ ὄιες ποτὶ τωὔλιον αὐταὶ ἀπῆνθον
χλωρᾶς ἐκ βοτάνας· ὃ δὲ τὰν Γαλάτειαν ἀείδων
αὐτὸς ἐπ' ἀιόνος κατετάκετο φυκιοέσσας
ἐξ ἀοῦς, ἔχθιστον ἔχων ὑποκάρδιον ἕλκος,
Κύπριδος ἐκ μεγάλας τό οἱ ἥπατι πᾶξε βέλεμνον.
ἀλλὰ τὸ φάρμακον εὗρε, καθεζόμενος δ' ἐπὶ πέτρας
ὑψηλᾶς ἐς πόντον ὁρῶν ἄειδε τοιαῦτα·

No other cure is there for love, Nicias, in my view,—neither ointment, nor balm—than the Muses; and this cure is mild and pleasant for mortals, though not easy to find—as you know all too well, Nicias, being a doctor, and also one who is especially favored by the Nine Muses. So, at any rate, my countryman, the Cyclops, Polyphemus, readily experienced at the time when, with new down growing over his mouth and temples, he passionately desired Galatea. And he did not court her with apples or roses or ringlets, but with stark mad conduct that treated everything else as trivial. Often his sheep would return to the fold on their own from the green pasture, while he, all alone on the shore strewn with seaweed, pined away from early dawn as he sang of Galatea, and nursed a ghastly wound that the dart of the powerful goddess of Cyprus had gashed into his heart. But he found the cure, and seated on a high rock he would gaze out to sea and sing this song.

The Theocritean prelude unequivocally foregrounds the conventional conception of *eros* as a severe pathological condition, figured as a "ghastly wound" inflicted by the goddess, Aphrodite. The narrator of the Idyll reveals that the addressee, Nicias, is a physician by vocation (*iatros*), and the phraseology of the whole passage reflects a medical model of diagnosis followed by therapy.[7] The word designating "cure" (*pharmakon*) is conspicuously repeated at the end of the prelude, thereby providing it with "ring-

[7] Tsouna (2007) 249–265 provides a thorough expsosition of the medical model in terms of Epicurean "therapeutic strategies". See further Nussbaum (1994) 13–77.

compositional" closure (lines 1 and 17).[8] The only effective cure for the diagnosed illness is proclaimed at the outset to be poetry ("The Muses": lines 3 and 6). As far as the Greek model is concerned, then, the proposition that *carmen* is efficacious—indeed uniquely so—as a remedy for erotic distress is firmly enunciated as a premiss before we listen to the actual song of the Cyclops. The reader of the Idyll is not, however, shown the famous Cyclops as yet cured of his wound by the end of this particular outpouring; rather we see a patient who is undergoing a successful course of treatment (declaiming verses), as may be inferred from the closing lines of the poem (80–81):

> Οὕτω τοι Πολύφαμος ἐποίμαινεν τὸν ἔρωτα
> μουσίσδων, ῥᾷον δὲ διᾶγ' ἢ εἰ χρυσὸν ἔδωκεν.
>
> Thus did Polyphemus shepherd his love with singing, and *fared* better than if he had spent gold.

The implication of the comparison is that poetic performance is a more successful (and even cost-free) drug than any medicine prescribed by a physician. The metaphor of "shepherding his love" by means of poetry is highly suggestive for the deeper understanding of the "bucolic scaffolding" that is endemic to the genre, for it reinforces the underlying notion that the "shepherd"—even one who is the object of caricature—is first and foremost a practitioner of sung verse.

In his deployment of the topos of "healing via poetry,"[9] Theocritus prominently asserts the unique therapeutic value of poetic expression. In the Vergilian redeployment, however, there is no correspondingly unambiguous proclamation at the outset of the healing power of *carmen* per se. As we have discussed in regard to his representation in *Ecl.* 9 of the limits of poetry in bringing about transformation in the "real" world (above, Ch.3), the narrating voice of the Bucolics is normally far from sanguine about the efficacy of the poetic medium in this respect. Instead of ascribing an inherently therapeutic value to song, Vergil appears to champion the acquisition of *philosophical insight* as the operative component of the content of the performed verse. This subtle, but nonetheless crucial, supplement to the Theocritean premiss becomes legible at the conclusion of Corydon's

[8] The idea that the term *pharmakon* may connote "magical incantation" is argued by Faraone (2006) 75–90. For varying interpretations of the term in this context, see Hunter, 220–221.

[9] The topos did not, of course, originate with Theocritus. On other literary antecedents see Hunter (p. 224).

monody in the context of the verbal echo that Vergil interjects at the moment of the lover's self-diagnosis. To be sure, Corydon's flash of awareness of his insane condition closely mimics that of Polyphemus:

> ὦ Κύκλωψ Κύκλωψ, πᾷ τὰς φρένας ἐκπεπότασαι; (*Id.* 11.73)
>
> O Cyclops, Cyclops, where have your wits wandered?
>
> a, Corydon, Corydon, quae te dementia cepit! (*Ecl.* 2. 69)
>
> Ah, Corydon, Corydon, what madness has taken hold of you!

Corydon's willingness to embrace the idea of a new partner implies that he has come to the point of putting an end to his desire for Alexis. He has therefore answered his own, rhetorically framed, question regarding the possibility of imposing an end to *amor*. Immediately before diagnosing his own form of desire as *dementia* he raises the issue of a potential limit (*modus*) to *amor* (66–68):

> aspice, aratra iugo referunt suspensa iuuenci,
> et sol crescentis decedens duplicat umbras;
> me tamen urit amor: *quis enim modus adsit amori*?
>
> See: the oxen are hauling back the ploughs hung with their yokes, and the setting sun is drawing out the lengthening shadows; yet I am being burnt with passionate love: *what limit may there be to such love*?

The reference to the setting sun and lengthening shadows (*crescentis umbras*) is a common motif of closure in the Eclogues[10] and Vergil's persona uses it as foil to his present *amor*, which ignores the natural rhythm observed by the burning sun in its daily course. It is on the basis of this notion of *interminability* that Corydon interrogates the nature of the erotic obsession and comes to the enlightening insight concerning his own unhealthy state of mind. To comprehend the apparent paradox of his simultaneously putting an end to *amor* and entertaining the idea of pursuing "another Alexis," it is expedient to examine the dual conception of erotic desire as elaborated in Epicurean thought.[11]

In his brief and perspicuous analysis of Epicurean thought-patterns in *Ecl.* 2, Alfonso Traina summarizes the bivalency of physical desire in the following terms: "Virgil inherits from Epicurus and Lucretius a dual conception of desire: on the one hand, desire as a natural phenomenon, a law of

---

[10] Cp. the ending of 1. and 10 and see above, p. 19, note 4.

[11] Here the proper name "Alexis" is to be understood in the generic (typological) sense of "another *amatus*." The all-too-common view that Corydon (inexplicably) wants an exact replica (in the paricular sense) of Alexis is a radical misperception of the poem's argument.

life, an ineluctable necessity that is shared by all sentient beings; on the other, desire as a perturbation of the soul, as a passion that overwhelms and destroys."[12] The former induces a natural pleasure (*hedone*), the latter is an aberrant emotion that causes mental distress—the very opposite of the ideal of *ataraxia*. The form of desire that Corydon has come to question in his mad pursuit of Alexis is the all-consuming blaze of passion (*ardor*) for a unique object that destroys the tranquility of the soul. It also falls into the category of "empty desires" (cp. the epithet *inane*) that was a key concept of the Epicurean hierarchy of desires.[13] Such a state of mind, if left uncontrolled, knows no limit (*modus*) and leaves the sufferer unfit for experiencing a measured (and natural) experience of erotic pleasure (*voluptas*). We shall return to the theme of immoderate *amor* in Ch.8 below, in which we discuss the passionate Gallus as portrayed in *Ecl.* 10. In regard to the treatment of *amor* in *Ecl.* 2, it is remarkable that Corydon himself broaches the subject of a "natural" erotic *voluptas*, even though he clearly conflates the two varieties of desire in his disjointed (*incondita*) and internally inconsistent utterances (65).

In his sophisticated recasting of the Cyclops' speech, Vergil retains the underlying idea (explicitly articulated at two points in the Idyll) that the lover is at least on the path to success in his brave effort to renounce *amor*.[14] The climaxes of the two speeches disclose the protagonists' notional capacity to abandon self-destructive and futile passion in favor of less fraught erotic experiences. For his part, Polyphemus comes to realize in his self-admonition that he can engage in lighter amours, as well as reconnecting with his neglected pastoral duties (73–79):

> αἴ κ' ἐνθὼν ταλάρως τε πλέκοις καὶ θαλλὸν ἀμάσας
> ταῖς ἄρνεσσι φέροις, τάχα κα πολὺ μᾶλλον ἔχοις νῶν.
> τὰν παρεοῖσαν ἄμελγε· τί τὸν φεύγοντα διώκεις;
> εὑρησεῖς Γαλάτειαν ἴσως καὶ καλλίον' ἄλλαν.

[12] Traina (1986), p. 74. The Italian text reads: "Virgilio eredita da Epicuro e da Lucrezio una concezione duplice dell'amore: da una parte l'amore come fatto di natura, legge di vita, necessita ineluttabile che accomuna tutti gli esseri animati; dall'altra l'amore come turbamento dell'anima, come passione che travolge e distrugge." For a cogent account of the notion of a "dual conception" of amor, see Brown (1987) 60–91, who trenchantly states (p. 65): "His [sc. Lucretius'] quarrel is not with Venus, but with *amor*."

[13] Of the extensive literature on the notion of "empty" (*kenos*) desire in Epicurean discourse, see, inter alia, Annas (1989); Brown (1987) 101–118.

[14] Du Quesnay (1979) argues (correctly, in my view, and without falling into the trap of reification) that both Polyphemus and Corydon are to be understood, in the Theocritean and Vergiliana contexts, as having achieved a cure for their passion.

πολλαὶ συμπαίσδεν με κόραι τὰν νύκτα κέλονται,
κιχλίζοντι δὲ πᾶσαι, ἐπεί κ' αὐταῖς ὑπακούσω.
δῆλον ὅτ' ἐν τᾷ γᾷ κἠγών τις φαίνομαι ἦμεν.

You would show a lot more sense if you went off to plait cheese-baskets, and gather fodder to feed your lambs. Milk the ewe that's near by; why pursue one that flees? You will probably find another and more beautiful Galatea. *Many young girls ask me to spend the night having fun with them*, and they all giggle the moment I pay attention to them. It's clear that on land I too am somebody.

Similarly, Corydon comes to imagine that he can find another attractive partner and concurrently resume a normal life of useful rustic labor (70–73):

semiputata tibi frondosa uitis in ulmo est:
quin tu aliquid saltem potius, quorum indiget usus,
uiminibus mollique paras detexere iunco?
inuenies alium, si te hic fastidit, Alexin.

A half-pruned vine lies on your leafy elm: why do you not at least prepare to weave something you need for your use from osiers and pliant rushes? You will find another Alexis if this one snubs you.

Vergil's *amator* indicates that he is now psychologically prepared to relinquish his infatuation with this particular *amatus*—a key symptom of a pathological variety of *amor*—and is ready to contemplate, with rational clarity, pursuing another object of desire. For Corydon, then, the self-diagnosis has proved liberating and fulcral, opening the door to a new attitude to exploring erotic *voluptas* with a different partner. In liberating himself from the obsession with a unique *amatus*, Corydon is following the prescription of Lucretius to the effect that "unius amor" (the desire for a unique and irreplaceable mate) is inherently dangerous and self-destructive.[15]

Despite these motif affinities, the subtle but important, difference between the Theocritean and Vergilian monologues as a whole resides in the particular *philosophical inflexion* latent at certain junctures in the text of the eclogue. By means of two (in no way otiose) Lucretian allusions, Vergil imparts to the diction of Corydon an Epicurean tonality that warrants our close inspection. In the first of these references to central Epicurean doctrines, the beleaguered *amator* redeploys a topos from the Cyclops' song, in which he vaunts his physical attractions on the grounds that he has seen his own image reflected in water (25–27):

---

[15] *DRN* 3.1063–1072.

nec sum adeo informis: nuper me in litore uidi,
cum placidum uentis staret mare. non ego Daphnin
iudice te metuam, *si numquam fallit imago*.

I'm not so unattractive: recently I saw myself at the sea-shore, at a time when the water was calm, as the winds had subsided. I would not fear competing even with Daphnis, with you as judge, *if a reflected image never deceives the viewer*.[16]

It is a well-documented Epicurean doctrine that our sense-perceptions afford us an accurate view of natural phenomena. In his expositions of the doctrine, Lucretius drew on the very example of the image (reflected in water or in a mirror) to clinch the argument that the resemblance between things and their reflections proves the existence of *simulacra*.[17] In his perceptive discussion of the phrase, "si numquam fallit imago," Traina adduces the passage in Bk. 4 of Lucretius in which the example of the reflected image in water is figured (*DRN* 4.98–101):[18]

Postremo *speculis in aqua* splendoreque in omni
quaecumque apparent nobis simulacra, necessest,
quandoquidem simili specie sunt praedita rerum,
ex ea imaginibus missis consistere eorum.

Finally, whatsoever resemblances [*simulacra*] we see *in mirrors, in water*, and in any bright surface, since they are endowed with the same appearance as the things [they reflect], must consist of images emitted from them.

In his seminal article on the Epicurean/Lucretion allusions in *Ecl.* 2, Traina formulates a cogent interpretation of the Vergilian reference to this precept and its exemplification: "Corydon's statement, 'numquam fallit imago' ['the image never deceives'] is therefore correct. But Vergil's smile occludes what the poet knew and the shepherd could not have known, viz. that if the senses do not deceive us, we are deceived by the judgments that we make based on their evidence […]. It is not the *imago*, but the prior assumption of its content, that deceived Corydon by making him believe that he was

---

16 The indicative mood in the protasis implies that the proposition regarding the infallibility of the mirror-iamge is taken as a fact.

17 On the Epicurean theory of *simulacra* (images; effluences), consult Sedley (1998) 39–42; Long/Sedley 22–25.; Asmis (2009) 101–102.

18 I cite *DRN* here in the edition of Smith. Traina's text follows the edition of Ernout, which in the passage here cited corresponds with that of Smith. The latter's note (loc. cit.) refers to other Lucretian (and Epicurean) passages that use the mirror example.

more handsome than Daphnis."[19] The passage in which Lucretius expatiates on this Epicurean precept receives a pregnant conclusion (*DRN* 4.462–468):

> cetera de genere hoc mirande multa videmus
> quae violare fidem quasi sensibus omnia quaerunt,
> nequiquam, quoniam pars horum maxima fallit
> *propter opinatus animi quos addimus ipsi,*
> pro visis ut sint quae non sunt sensibu' visa.

> many other phenomena of this type we are amazed to observe, which all seek, as it were, to contravene the faith we have in our senses—all in vain, since the majority of those things deceive us *on account of opinions formed in the mind that we ourselves impute to them,* so that things not perceived by our senses are believed to have been so perceived.

Of course, neither Vergil nor his comic *persona*, Corydon, is here playing the part of an orthodox representative of the school of Epicurus; rather, the former student of Epicurean philosophy has framed his humorous portrayal of Corydon's self-deception in terms of a standard Epicurean precept as mediated by Lucretian verse. By invoking an Epicurean illustration of the key concept of the infallible *imago*, Vergil imputes a modicum of insight (however imperfect and comical) to his woe-begone herdsman.

In the second allusion, Vergil's speaker tosses off yet another gnomic utterance—this time as a climax to a set of analogies with animal drives that adapts a topos from Theocritus[20] while utilizing language that evokes Lucretian poetry (63–65):

> torua leaena lupum sequitur, lupus ipse capellam,
> florentem cytisum sequitur lasciua capella,
> te Corydon, o Alexi: *trahit sua quemque uoluptas.*

> The fierce lioness pursues the wolf, the wolf himself the she-goat, the lusty she-goat the flowering clover, and Corydon pursues you, Alexis: *each is driven by his own pleasure.*

Corydon's *sententia*, which constitutes a Vergilian increment to the topos, captures the idea of a "natural" erotic desire that generates *voluptas* in the entire animal kingdom. Though his animal analogies are amusingly

[19] Traina, op. cit., p. 79. Epicurus himself pronounced memorably on the topic of false opinion in regard to *simulacra* in the Letter to Herodotus (DL 10.50). On the topic of the reliability of sense-perceptions in general (a key Epicurean concept) see the exposition in Konstan (2008) p. 62 in the context of a discussion of human perception of the gods.

[20] *Id.* 10. 30–31. Theocritus uses the animal analogies as foil to the human lover's desire, but does not cap the sequence with a gnome.

gauche (hungry animal predators in search of a meal), he nonetheless introduces an ummistakeably Lucretian note into his self-serving deployment of the adage. In the magnificent hymn to Venus with which Lucretius introduces his poem, the goddess is addressed in the opening line as "hominum divumque voluptas" ("source of pleasure human and divine") and she is subsequently lauded later in the invocation for her role in implanting the sexual libido (*blandum … amorem*) that is indispensable for reproduction (14–20):

> inde ferae pecudes persultant pabula laeta
> et rapidos tranant amnis: ita capta lepore
> *te sequitur cupide quo quamque inducere pergis*.
> denique per maria ac montis fluviosque rapaces
> frondiferasque domos avium camposque virentis
> omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem
> efficis ut cupide generatim saecla propagent.

> Next wild animals and livestock exult over the glad pastures and swim across rapid streams: so taken by your charms *each one pursues you eagerly wheresoever you go on to lead them*. Finally, through seas and mountains and rushing rivers, and the leafy homes of birds and the green plains, striking sweet desire into the breasts of all creatures, you cause them eagerly to reproduce generations after their own species.

The invocation to Venus parades a grandiose backdrop for the essential role of *voluptas* in motivating the entire animate cosmos (humans as well as animals) and the committed Epicurean also speaks elsewhere in positive terms of the same kind of "natural" sexual attraction—a form of desire that is distinct from the passion of *amor*, which is seen as a form of *dementia*.[21]

The closest parallel (in conceptual no less than purely verbal terms) to Corydon's gnome, "trahit sua quemque voluptas," occurs in the context of the discussion of "free volition" (*libera voluntas*) in *DRN* Bk.2. The philosophical context of the parallel is of crucial significance for the light its author seeks to shed on the capacity of the human agent to (re)direct, and ultimately to control, erotic desire (2. 256–258):

> libera per terras unde haec animantibus exstat,
> unde est haec, inquam, fatis avolsa voluntas,
> per quam progredimur *quo ducit quemque voluptas* …?

> from where arises this free volition in living creatures throughout the entire earth; from where, I ask, is this volition, torn from the grip of the fates, by which we proceed *wherever our pleasure leads us* …?

---

[21] E.g. *DRN* 2.172–174. See Fowler (2002) ad line 173 for a clarification of Venus as "an ambiguous figure" in the *DRN*.

In the lines immediately preceding this excerpt Lucretius has been arguing for the existence of the swerve (*kline*; *clinamen*) in the motion of constituent atoms. The ethical implications of this famous Epicurean doctrine are far from mundane, since the swerve hypothesis establishes the logical ground for the "free volition" (*libera voluntas*—sometimes misleadingly rendered as "free will")[22] that we observe in human (and some animal) action. Lucretius in this segment of his poem mounts a robust defense of rational agency by explaining "our ability to move ourselves as we wish in order to get what we desire."[23] The Vergilian allusion evoking the link between *voluntas* (free volition) and the pursuit of *voluptas* (pleasure) is directly pertinent to his representation of the transition of Corydon from insanity to incipient enlightenment. From the moment that Corydon takes cognizance of his *dementia*, he begins to manifest the wish to redirect his desire to a different love-object. The philosophical underpinning that informs his ability to redirect desire in this way lies in the perception (dimly foreshadowed earlier in his monologue in the Lucretian parallel) that the pursuit of a particular love-object is not irrevocably predetermined.

Vergil's subtle inflexion of the Theocritean notion of the therapeutic *carmen*, then, rests not on the intrinsically cathartic power of music/song, but rather on the discursive content of the monologue.[24] For despite Corydon's disjointed effusion, the factor that cures him of his hopeless infatuation for Alexis is his acquisition of insight into his own mental state. It is his involutional turn to rational self-diagnosis in the course of the song, not the act of performance per se, that sets him on the path to recovery of his sanity. At this point in his evolution, as Vergil dramatizes it, his *studium* is no longer empty (*inane*). The failure of his previous rehearsals was due to their inefficacy in reversing the repudiation he was experiencing on the part of his chosen *amatus*. The song-performance ceases to be fruitless precisely at the point at which the *amator* comes to the realization that he can re-direct his *voluptas*—a redirection that entails an abandonment of the obsession with a unique object of desire. The framing of his predicament—and its poten-

---

[22] See the acute discussion of "Lucretius on the swerve and *voluntas*" in O'Keefe (2005), 26–47.

[23] O'Keefe, op. cit., p. 9.

[24] On the Epicurean position on the failure of music therapy as opposed to words, see Hunter ad *Id*.11. p. 224. Armstrong (1995) 217–219, draws attention to the role of *logos* (intellectual properties) over aginst mere acoustic factors in the evaluation of poetry according to Philodemus.

tial transcendence—in Epicurean terms (mediated, as so often in Vergil, by Lucretian poetry) is an important subtext in Vergil's transformation of bucolic discourse. In the eudaimonist ethics of the founder, the pharmacological effects of true understanding is no decorative metaphor; rather it is fundamental to the so-called "tetrapharmakon" ("four-part cure") that is an essential part of Epicurean doctrine.[25]

The author of the Eclogues also explores the issue of the efficacy of *carmen* in relation to erotic desire in the bucolic exchange between the singers, Damon and Alphesiboeus in *Ecl.* 8. His exploration takes its point of departure from the dual conceptualization of desire as healthy as opposed to pathological. The type of negative *amor-dementia* that defines the extreme passion of Corydon for Alexis returns to the bucolic stage in the form of the two juxtaposed, rival *carmina* in *Ecl.* 8, which together display *attitudes* to overcoming mental disturbance that diverge, in the final analysis, from that of Corydon.

To begin with Damon: Vergil establishes multiple parallels between this figure's erotic adversity and that of Corydon. These parallels (verbal and ideational) are tantamount to systematic cross-references and therefore call for elucidation, since they invite comparison between the hapless *amatores* in regard to their preferred methods of coping with their common insanity. Damon's speech is first and foremost a "dramatic monologue,"[26] which is subdivided artificially into segments by a single-line refrain. Remove the refrain, and we are left with a continuous, if discursively "disjointed," outpouring that is basically a *querela* of the unhappy lover (cp. "dum queror" ["while I complain"] at line 19). His complaint is delivered to a montane audience (the Maenalus), which also, significantly, includes the Arcadian god, Pan (22–24):

> Maenalus argutumque nemus pinusque loquentis
> semper habet, *semper pastorum ille audit amores*
> Panaque, qui primus calamos non passus inertis.
>
> Maenalus has perpetually high-pitched groves and eloquent pines, *he constantly listens to shepherds' love- songs* and to Pan, who first refused to let reeds lie unused.

The significance of Pan's constant presence for the Eclogue's argument will be discussed below when we consider the vain hope that Damon pins on

[25] The fourfold prescription for happiness is to be found in a fragment of Philodemus, *Pap. Herc.* 1005, col. IV. 9–14, on which see Inwood et al., iii and vii.

[26] Clausen ad lines 17–60.

musical performance. For the moment, we draw attention to the parallel with the Corydon of *Ecl.* 2, who pronounces his *querela* "montibus et silvis" ("to the mountains and woods" [5]).

Another, no less telling, resemblance relates to the "erotic triangle" (Damon → Nysa ← Mopsus), which is elaborated in language that recalls the similar predicament of Corydon (Corydon →Alexis ← Iollas): "quid non speremus amantes" ("what may we lovers not hope for?" [26]—cp. "nec quid speraret habebat" in *Ecl.* 2.2). Both *amatores*, then, are portrayed as having no basis for hope of reciprocity. It is noteworthy, however, that Damon's reference to his unrealistic expectation of fulfillment is cast in gnomic form. This points the reader in the direction of a particular category of erotic desire: the *amans* is the victim of an invasive *amor* of the diseased variety. The common denominator of the erotic triangle, of course, is that one of the two pursuers of the same love-object is rejected in favor of the other; so to Corydon's "despectus tibi sum" (2.19: "I am scorned by you") corresponds Damon's "despicis omnis" (32: "you scorn us all"), as he sarcastically contemplates the imminent marriage of his beloved with this rival ("o digna coniuncta viro" ["O married to a worthy spouse"]). There is even a link in physical appearance between Damon and the literary avatar, the Cyclops, Polyphemus, in respect to the "hairy visage" motif, for Damon ruefully speaks of his "hirsutumque supercilium promissaque barba" (34: "shaggy eyebrows and untrimmed beard").

The most important cross-reference is contained in Damon's self-characterization, in so far as he diagnoses his own passion as a form of madness (*malus error* ["ill-fated aberration"] [41]. He is led by this recognition of his *amor-dementia* to contemplate suicide, as is intimated in 20 and is made more explicit in 59–60:

> praeceps aërii specula de montis in undas
> deferar; extremum hoc munus morientis habeto.
>
> I'll throw myself down headlong from a high mountain cliff into the waves;
> you may have this as my last dying gift!

With this dark threat on Damon's part we are clearly meant to compare the imputation of the same impulse to Corydon (adapted from the Theocritean intertext): "mori me denique cogis" (7: "you will drive me to death in the end"). The cumulative effect of this plurality of cross-references is to certify the *amor-dementia* of Damon as carrying the same symptoms as Corydon's.

In bringing to light a latent "interplay of ideas" in the Eclogues, we have traced the central subject of the limitations of *carmen* in relation to various spheres of human experience. In respect to the erotic sphere, it is expedient

to pursue our analysis of the presumptive power (and lack thereof) of poetic activity under three major subdivisions: (1) *carmen* as music (2) *carmen* as magical incantation and (3) *carmen* as discourse. These three aspects are, of course, analytical categories only, since they clearly overlap in concrete *carmina*. Our discussion of the Corydon eclogue focused on the discursive aspect—the emergent capacity of the embedded speaker to apply ratiocination in reaching insight into his psychological state and in arguing his way to an inchoate solution on the basis of this insight. In the context of *Ecl.* 8, Vergil explores, through the medium of competing song-performances, the other two aspects of our triple schema: (A) in the Song of Damon (17–61) he exposes the limits of *carmen* considered primarily as musical performance and (B) in the succeeding Song of Alphesiboeus (64–109), he openly raises the question of the efficacy of *carmen* considered as magical incantation.

The emphasis on *carmen* as musical performance is prominently etched in the prelude to the eclogue (1–5):

> Pastorum Musam Damonis et Alphesiboei,
> immemor herbarum quos est mirata iuuenca
> certantis, quorum stupefactae carmine lynces,
> et mutata suos requierunt flumina cursus,
> Damonis Musam dicemus et Alphesiboei.

> The shepherds' Muse of Damon and Alphesiboeus, at whose competing music the heifer was amazed, unmindful of the grass, and by whose singing lynxes were stupefied and altered rivers stayed their courses—we shall sing the shepherds' Muse of Damon and Alphesiboeus.

It is axiomatic that, behind the mention of the power of *carmen* to charm elements of the natural world (domestic creatures, wild animals, flowing rivers) stands the figure of the archetypal musician, Orpheus. Although the poet foregrounds the "Orphean" claim to hold nature in its spell as an attribute of both bucolic rivals, the claim is made more pronounced in Damon's song in the content of its recurrent refrain:

> incipe Maenalios mecum, *mea tibia*, uersus.

> Begin with me, *my flute*, Maenalian verses

Damon appeals, by apostrophe, to his musical instrument, the *tibia*,[27] in the course of his performance, whereas Alphesiboeus, in his turn, choses

[27] The *tibia* more closely resembled an oboe than a flute, but I have retained the conventional translation.

a refrain that elicits the magical puissance of the *carmen* to bring the lover home:

> ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnin.
>
> Draw Daphnis home from town, draw him, my songs.

The difference between the two refrains is by no means adventitious, rather it patently reflects each singer's faith in the competing modalities of power inherent in their separate performances. Damon's reliance on the idea of the mythic Orphean potency of music is reemphasized in the penultimate segment of his *querela* in sardonic tones, suggesting that his faith has proved illusory (52–56):

> nunc et ouis ultro fugiat lupus, aurea durae
> mala ferant quercus, narcisso floreat alnus,
> pinguia corticibus sudent electra myricae,
> certent et cycnis ululae, sit Tityrus Orpheus,
> Orpheus in siluis, inter delphinas Arion.
>
> Now let even the wolf flee from sheep, let the hard oaktrees bear golden apples, let the alder bloom with narcissus, let tamarisks exude rich amber from their barks, and owls compete with swans, let Tityrus be an Orpheus—an Orpheus in the woods, an Arion among the dolphins!

The legendary musicians, Arion and Orpheus, are invoked in an *adynaton* that marks the nadir of despair for the pastoral composer/performer who has come to realize that his own musical craft is impotent.

There is additional irony—discernible at the philosophical level—in Damon's bitter acknowledgment of the failure of *carmen*-as-music to alter the disposition of the *amata*, especially in view of the very extravagant "Orphean" claims that adorn the prelude to the Eclogue. The Herculaneum papyri containing fragments of Philodemus' corpus have shed increasing light on the complex Epicurean viewpoint regarding the roles of music and poetry in shaping the conduct of life in a positive way. If musical composition per se is conceived as devoid of thought, it is of no use, within the school's epistemological system, to the pursuit of enlightenment, and even its supposed value as catharsis is rendered moot. Philodemus' polemical treatise *De Musica*, which is an invaluable source for our knowledge of the Epicurean perspective on the efficacy of music, contains a robust refutation of opposing viewpoints that make strong claims for the intrinsic power of music. As far as the domain of mental suffering (erotic or other) is concerned, he bluntly remarks that music is devoid of therapeutic, or even consolatory, value, and asserts that only reason (*logos*) can accomplish these ends.[28]

---

[28] On lack of therapeutic value, see Philodemus *De Musica* (Delattre 2007) 79; on consola-

That Damon implicitly abandons his faith in music as enunciated in his refrain becomes pathetically evident at a crucial juncture in his song (32–35):

> o digno coniuncta uiro, dum despicis omnis,
> dumque tibi est odio mea fistula dumque capellae
> hirsutumque supercilium promissaque barba,
> *nec curare deum credis mortalia quemquam.*
>
> O aren't you married to a worthy spouse! meanwhile you scorn us all, and loathe my pan-pipe and my kids, and my shaggy eyebrows and untrimmed beard, *and you do not believe that any of the gods is concerned with mortal affairs.*

Damon conjoins the rejection of his pan-pine, emblem of his musical competence, on the part of his *amata* with the salient observation that she holds the view that the gods are detached from all mortal affairs: "you do not believe that any of the gods is concerned with mortal affairs" ("nec curare deum credis mortalia quemquam"). This pointed remark amounts to a vivid re-formulation of the central Epicurean precept of divine detachment from human concerns and provides further corroboration of our argument that thought-patterns emanating from the Garden constitute a pervasive subtext in the universe of Vergilian Bucolic.[29] With respect to erotic desire, then, the belief-system of Damon's beloved, Nysa, is in fundamental conflict with his own, and his deep alienation from her affection is measured in both emotional and philosophical terms.

The song of Alphesiboeus (B) is consonant with the overall Vergilian program of interrogating the limitations of *carmen*, but its exploratory path leads in the direction of the supposed power of sheer incantation. As we have noted above, the refrain that runs through the second song encapsulates the magical function of *carmen*, as distinct from the earlier refrain of Damon which compactly expresses the musical or "Orphean" function. In the Alphesiboean performance, verses are essentially *ancillary* to ritual deeds, as the singer informs us trenchantly in her opening segment (64–67):

---

tory value, *idem* 129. On Philodemus' articulation of Epicurean positions with respect to poetry see Asmis (1995); Armstrong (1985).

[29] Lipka, p. 76, notes that the remark is preceded by a Lucretian tag, *coniuncta viro*, which is apparently unique in Latin literature to Vergil and Lucretius (cp. *DRN* 5.1012). On the gods' detachment from human concerns in Epicurean thought, see the trenchant remark of Wigodsky (1974) 73, who calls the Lucretian rearticulation of this central dogma at *DRN* 2. 644–660 "a paraphrase of *KD* 1."

Effer aquam et molli cinge haec altaria uitta
uerbenasque adole pinguis et mascula tura,
coniugis ut magicis sanos auertere sacris
experiar sensus; *nihil hic nisi carmina desunt.*

Bring water and bind this altar with pliant wool; burn rich vervain and male frankincense, so that I may contrive to turn the sane senses of my fiancé with magic rites: *nothing but spells are lacking now.*

The singer/performer next proceeds to make the usual exaggerated claims surrounding the power of magic spells to alter elements of the external world (e.g. to draw the moon down from the sky, or to cause snakes to split apart)—claims that are authenticated by invoking the legendary enchantress, Circe (69–71):

carmina uel caelo possunt deducere lunam,
carminibus Circe socios mutauit Vlixi,
frigidus in pratis cantando rumpitur anguis.

Magic songs can even draw the moon down from the sky; by magic songs Circe transformed the companions of Ulysses; by the act of singing the cold-blooded snake in the meadows is made to split apart.

Despite the robust triple vaunting of the potency of song (*carmina; carminibus; cantando*), there obtrudes an ironic note in the reference to Circe, for Virgil's readers would have been aware of the limits to Circe's power in relation to the erotic sphere. As is also the case with that other supremely iconic enchantress of antiquity, Medea, the archetypal sorceress is notoriously unsuccessful in altering the mind of the *amatus* (Jason, no less than Ulysses, remains unaltered). The Roman amatory elegists, who by convention express their envy of the trumpeted power of magical *carmina* are also keenly cognizant of the failure of spells in the context of unrequited love.[30] The hyperbolic claim of the singer, then, is a rhetorical *prise de position* that is about to be put to the test in the amatory arena.

As the Song of Alphesiboeus unfolds, we are left in no uncertainty about the *type of desire* being called into play in the incantatory speech-act. The similarity with Damon's *amor* is manifest: the female singer shares the pathological variety of erotic desire that we saw exemplified in Corydon's *dementia* in *Ecl.* 2. Like her bucolic rival in song whose *amata* is labeled a betrothed (*coniugis*: 18), she is a neglected lover whose absent beloved,

[30] The failure of the legendary sorceress in the domain of *amor* was an elegiac *topos*. For detailed discussion of the motif, see Prince (2002).

Daphnis, is characterized by the same term (*coniugis*: 66). The identification of her particular mental affliction is reinforced by intra-textual references to Corydon's *amor-dementia*; thus in specifying the type of mutual erotic desire she hopes to inflict on her recalcitrant *amatus*, Daphnis, the phrase, *talis amor* ("such a desire") frames an important segment in her suite of ritual pronouncements (85–89):

> *talis amor* Daphnin qualis cum fessa iuuencum
> per nemora atque altos quaerendo bucula lucos
> propter aquae riuum uiridi procumbit in ulua
> perdita, nec serae meminit decedere nocti,
> *talis amor* teneat, nec sit mihi cura mederi.

> May *such a desire* take hold of Daphnis as when a heifer, exhausted from searching for her mate amid the glades and highland groves, sinks down in despair near a brook in the green sedge, and forgets to give in to the advance of night—may *such a desire* take hold of him, and may I not care to cure it!

At a superficial reading it might appear that the desire being induced here is of the "natural" variety, since it draws on an analogue in the world of domestic animals (the heifer). Upon closer inspection, however, it is patent that the singer has projected the extreme type of human "elegiac" *amor* unto the anthropomorphized beast. As Coleman, who fully grasps the process of externalization that is operative in the simile, expresses it (ad line 88): "… the heifer-simile applies only superficially to Daphnis. In depicting the pathos of Daphnis' plight, to which she professes indifference (89), she is unconsciously revealing her own feelings. The wistful longing and the weariness of the searcher belong to her; she is like the wandering Pasiphae (6.42). The use of this simile is thus a fine psychological stroke by the poet." The participle *perdita* ("despairing"), applied to the personified heifer, is the same used to modify Corydon at 2.59 (*perditus*), and corroborates the affiliation among all three of the lovers (Corydon, Damon and Alphesiboeus) with respect to the *type of affliction* (*talis amor*) in question. The onomastic play on the singer "Alphesiboeus" ("abundant in cattle"—an epithet formation that has Homeric antecedents—)[31] insinuates a note of irony into the suitor's desperate situation, for it suggests a potential female *coniunx* who comes with a rich dowry or "bride-price," and figuratively underlines the irrelevance of wealth to the successful pursuit of the beloved (cp. the appeals on the part of Corydon and Polyphemus to the size of their herds

31 See Clausen ad 5.73.

in their love-suits). The connexion with herds of cattle in the etymological wordplay is elaborated further in terms of Vergilian wit, as it reappears in the simile (discussed above) of the love-sick female heifer wandering in search of her bovine mate.

The song of Alphesiboeus culminates in an equivocal manner with regard to magical *carmen*. The narrative dénouement to the sequence of spells and ritual acts overtly addresses the issue of efficacy in dramatic fashion. Before we offer a somewhat unconventional analysis of the final lines, however, it is appropriate to observe the moment earlier in her punctuated incantation at which the singer reveals her inner uncertainty about the modality of charms (100–103):

> fer cineres, Amarylli, foras riuoque fluenti
> transque caput iace, nec respexeris. his ego Daphnin
> adgrediar; *nihil ille deos, nil carmina curat.*

> Carry off the ashes, Amaryllis, and toss them over your head into the running stream and don't look back. With these I shall go after Daphnis; *he has no care for the gods or for spells.*

Despite her belligerent tone in her instruction to her helper, Amaryllis, she acknowledges that Daphnis is indifferent to magic charms—a revelation that belies, if it does not actually undercut, her confidence in her sorcerer's ritual weapons. No less subversive of her erotic stratagems is her disclosure of her beloved's attitude to the gods, which is partially reminiscent of Damon's more abstractly framed Epicurean characterization of Nysa's disbelief concerning the gods' interest in human affairs. These moments of doubt on the singer's part suggest that Alphesiboeus is not as self-assured about her future success as her hyperbolic claims would make us believe, and they dimly prefigure the ambiguous representation of the dénouement.

In the final scene of the mini-drama, the singer herself interrogates the very assumption that underpins the belief in the potency of magic spells (105–109):

> 'aspice: corripuit tremulis altaria flammis
> sponte sua, dum ferre moror, cinis ipse. bonum sit!'
> nescio quid certe est, et Hylax in limine latrat.
> credimus? an, qui amant, ipsi sibi somnia fingunt?
> parcite, ab urbe uenit, iam parcite carmina, Daphnis

> Look! the ash itself all on its own, while I have been slow to carry it off, has burst into trembling flames on the altar. May the omen be favorable! Something is going on, for sure, and Hylax is barking on the threshold. Can we trust our hopes? or do lovers themselves construct their own fantasies? Calm down! Daphnis is coming home from town; calm down, my songs!

Illusion or reality? Subjective projection or objective phenomenon? The implications of the general question the singer poses here are far from banal, since they cast fundamental doubt on the mental state of lovers who are predisposed to construct scenarios in accordance with their dreams and hopes. In the poem's final line the singer asserts in her refrain that her lover is returning home, but after the self-interrogation of the preceding line the reader is left with the impression that coincidence rather than cause and effect may be an equally valid explanation for the outcome. With the knowledge imparted by the performer that Daphnis stands outside of the circle of belief that undergirds magical incantation, the ultimate question of the efficacy of the *carmen* is rendered moot. From a narratological perspective, then, the reader exits the poem through the gates of ivory.[32]

Where does Vergil's ethical subtext leave us in regard to the question of effectual resources for coping with erotic adversity? When the two different modalities of negotiating amorous relationships in *Ecl.* 8 are juxtaposed, it becomes clear that there is no extraneous *techne* (neither music, on the one hand, nor magical incantation, on the other) that can successfully transform the affections of an indifferent or alienated *amatus*. Instead, the double trajectory in the rival song-performances of *Ecl.* 8 points to stringent limits to the inherent power of *carmen* in creating or redirecting erotic desire. The many cross-references Vergil makes to the Corydon monologue in *Ecl.* 2 underscore the gaping deficiency in the shared conception of *amor*: the disposition of the other (the beloved) to reciprocate desire is beyond manipulation and control on the part of the *amator*. The *aporia* of the rejected *amator* is crystallized in the notion of *modus* as articulated most trenchantly by Corydon: "quis enim modus adsit amori?" ("What limit may there be to the power of *amor*?" [2.63]). As Corydon's own self-examination reveals, it is uniquely through the internal resource of reason (*logos*, as opposed to some external *techne*) that the lover can succeed in imposing a *modus* on a destructive type of passion.

---

32 On the narratological crux of Aeneas' departure from the underworld by the gates of ivory, see Davis (1994).

CHAPTER SEVEN

EROTIC VICISSITUDE WRIT LARGE (*ECL.* 6)

> Nor does one who avoids unhealthy love [*amorem*] lack the enjoyment of Venus, but rather he reaps those advantages that are without penalty; for a purer pleasure [*voluptas*] is thereby guaranteed to healthy [*sanis*] than to love-sick persons [*miseris*].
>
> Lucretius[1]

The problem of erotic pathology is a central topic that Vergil illuminates in two of the most structurally important poems in the Eclogues: *Ecl.* 6, which is positioned as a programmatic overture to the second half of the collection, and *Ecl.* 10, which provides closure to the entire ensemble. Both of these complex masterpieces have elicited voluminous scholarly investigations aimed at decoding their elusive principles of coherence and unity of aesthetic design.[2] Our limited objective in this excavation of the "interplay of ideas" in *Ecl.* 6 is not to offer a strictly diachronic reading of the whole poem, but rather to elucidate the conceptual apparatus that Vergil employs in elaborating the theme of deranged passion (*amor insanus*) and its severely negative repercussions on the attainment of human felicity.

The main body of the eclogue is occupied by the notorious "Song of Silenus." In the course of this embedded performance, the reader is confronted with an over-arching narrative account of erotic adversity "writ large." Before embarking on an analysis that seeks to extrapolate the broader philosophical framework underpinning the effusions of the Silenus-persona, it is expedient to draw attention to certain aspects of the prelude (a "generic disavowal")[3] that foreshadows the ambitious thematic scope of the embedded catalogue-poem.

---

[1] *DRN* 4.1073–1076: "Nec Veneris fructu caret is qui vitat amorem,/ sed potius quae sunt sine poena commoda sumit./nam certe purast sanis magis inde voluptas/quam miseris."

[2] See e.g. Leach (1968); Putnam (1970) 195–221; 342–394; Conte (1986) 100–129.

[3] I have initiated and sought to promote this terminology in place of the conventional designation, *recusatio*, which is fundamentally misleading, since it ignores the "paradoxical intent" of the form. See Davis (1991) 28–30.

The prelude to *Ecl.* 6 has been minutely (and justifiably) deciphered as an elegant enunciation of a "Callimachean" esthetic program with its foregrounding of a motif—the intervention/interdiction of Apollo—that is adapted from the famous prologue to the *Aetia*.[4] The idea that it constitutes a literary manifesto is a valid and widely accepted interpretation of the passage, and it would be superfluous to go over this well-trodden path in the context of the present inquiry. Instead I shall focus my observations on those aspects of the "generic disavowal" that are most pertinent to the latent problematic of how to achieve an *amor* that is positive and contributes to human flourishing. A brief sketch of the rhetorical basis of the disavowal apparatus is, however, a necessary preliminary to understanding the Vergilian replay of the form.

It is a critical axiom that the concept of genre, for the major Augustan poets, is founded on the notion of stylistic decorum—a notion that presupposes a conventional *correlation* between level of style and subject-matter. A primary function of the disavowal strategy, however, is to challenge a particular traditional correlation of content and form by means of an apologetic strategy that, paradoxically, may occasionally annex elements of the presumably alien genre. Even more important to the hidden agenda of the rhetorical device is the opportunity it affords the author to redefine a novel poetic space against the conveniently artificial foil of the "other" genre. Thus the author of *Ecl.* 6 first represents his choice of bucolic poetry as having been ordered by an imperious Apollo who derails his original intention to compose a grand-style heroic encomium (1–9):

> Prima Syracosio dignata est ludere uersu
> nostra neque erubuit siluas habitare Thalea.
> cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthius aurem
> uellit et admonuit: 'pastorem, Tityre, pinguis
> pascere oportet ouis, deductum dicere carmen.'
> nunc ego (namque super tibi erunt qui dicere laudes,
> Vare, tuas cupiant et tristia condere bella)
> agrestem tenui meditabor harundine Musam:
> non iniussa cano.

> Our muse, Thalea, was the first[5] to find worth in composing poetry in the Syracusan strain, and did not blush to make the woods her home. When I proposed to sing of kings and wars, Cynthian Apollo pulled my ear and

---

[4] See the seminal contribution to the topic by the late Wendell Clausen (1964).

[5] A comparative analysis of the common "*primus* motif" in Augustan poetry (the conventional claim to have been the first among the Latin poets to have composed in a particular genre pioneered by the Greeks) strongly favors this reading of the sentence's syntax. There

> warned me: 'A shepherd, Tityrus, should feed his sheep to be plump, but keep his poems thinly spun.' So now (seeing that there will always be no end of bards who will sing your praises, Varus, and narrate grim campaigns) I intend to ply my woodland Muse on a slender reed-pipe: I sing on the god's command.

The alternative hexameter composition that Vergil's main singer-persona, Tityrus, choses to perform in *Ecl.* 6 turns out to be no run-of-the-mill bucolic *ludus*, but rather, it promulgates—via a second, ancillary, persona, Silenus—a repertoire of generic tales that greatly extend the thematic scope of traditional bucolic.[6] The "disavowing" poet achieves a double goal, rhetorically speaking: the addressee, Varus, does indeed receive a drastically abbreviated praise of his achievements; at the same time, he is offered an alternative specimen of expansive "bucolic" verse that is anything but banal and, by virtue of its dedicatory speech-act, confers immortality on the *laudandus*. The greatly amplified generic experiment that constitutes *Ecl.* 6 will find an appreciative and sophisticated audience that conspicuously includes the divine poet, Apollo (9–12):

> *si quis tamen haec quoque, si quis*
> *captus amore leget,* te nostrae, Vare, myricae,
> te nemus omne canet; nec Phoebo gratior ulla est
> quam sibi quae Vari praescripsit pagina nomen.

> *If, however, anyone in the grip of passion will read this poem also,* then not only our tamarisks, but our entire grove of trees will sing of you, Varus; and no other page will bring more pleasure to Apollo than one that has been inscribed with your name at its head.

Apollo's anticipated pleasure in the ensuing performance constitutes, at one level, a supreme compliment to Varus, since it is set in motion by the dedication itself; at another and no less important, level, it authenticates the author's new-fangled bucolic experiment by co-opting in advance the critical approval of the divine poet. In imagining a receptive ideal readership ("si quis captus amore *leget*") for his novel generic excursion, Vergil foregrounds a subject (*amor*) that will operate as a leitmotif of the ensuing Silenus-song. The participial locution, *captus amore* ("in the grip of passion") is subtly

---

is, however, a well-entrenched school of philological criticism that reads the opening lines as literary biography (e.g. the translation by Lee [1980]: "With Syracusan verses our Thalea first/thought fit play").

6 Harrison (2007) 24–72 provides a richly nuanced discussion of "generic enrichment" in regard to 4, 6 and 10.

ambiguous, if not polysemsous.[7] There are two main connotations of the phrase that we may single out as being especially germane to a major thematic focus of the embedded *carmen*. Both of these call for an extended gloss.

In the motif environment of the Eclogues, Vergil occasionally employs the verb *amare* to signify: "to read/hear a literary work with intense pleasure and critical approval." This connotation is best illustrated by its double deployment in *Ecl.* 3, which consists of an agonistic "amoebean" exchange between two bucolic singers, Menalcas and Damoetas, performed in the presence of an adventitious literary umpire, Palaemon. In the opening round of the match, each contestant makes the extravagant claim that a supreme divine auditor/critic "loves" his poetry (3. 60–62):

> [D] Ab Ioue principium Musae: Iouis omnia plena;
> ille colit terras, *illi mea carmina curae*.
> [M] Et me Phoebus *amat*; Phoebo sua semper apud me
> munera sunt, lauri et suaue rubens hyacinthus.

> [D] From Jove begins my Muse: of Jove all things are full; he cultivates the earth, *he cares for my songs*. [M] And Phoebus *loves* me; his gifts are constantly with me: laurel and sweetly blushing hyacinth.

In Damoetas' opening couplet the word *curae* carries an amatory connotation that is picked up, in a more robust formulation, by Menalcas' *amat*. The two competing expressions are virtually synonymous in context, since the object "loved" by Apollo in the Menalcas riposte is clearly not the actual person (*me*), but the person *qua* poet or, more broadly, the poems (*carmina*) he composes. There is also an ancillary erotic innuendo in the emblematic gifts (*munera*)[8] that Menalcas has in store for the god, for "laurel" and "hyacinth" are cryptic references to the famed *amores* of Apollo, Daphne and Hyacinthus (both *amati* were metamorphosed into respective plant eponyms). What both singers are chiefly claiming, then, in their appeal to an amatory lexicon is a "love" relationship in a purely figurative sense, connoting the critical favors notionally bestowed on the rivals by two gods who are connected closely with the Muses: Jupiter, who is their coparent along with Mnemosyne, and Phoebus Apollo, who is leader of their choir.

---

[7] Coleman lists two of the connotations as though they are mutually exclusive: "either 'himself a captive of love'; or more likely 'attracted by the subject of love.' "

[8] *Sua munera* is ambiguous: the sense can be either "my gifts to him" or "his gifts to me."

At a later juncture in the same exchange, the exemplary poet/critic Pollio is invoked in an analogous pair of claims and counterclaims that again draw on the verb *amare* to signify the powerful attraction induced in the hearer/reader by a superlative poetic performance (84–91).

> [D] *Pollio amat nostram*, quamuis est rustica, *Musam*:
> Pierides, uitulam lectori pascite uestro.
> [M] *Pollio et ipse facit noua carmina*: pascite taurum,
> iam cornu petat et pedibus qui spargat harenam.
> [D] *Qui te, Pollio, amat*, ueniat quo te quoque gaudet;
> mella fluant illi, ferat et rubus asper amomum.
> [M] Qui Bauium non odit, *amet tua carmina*, Maeui,
> atque idem iungat uulpes et mulgeat hircos.

> [D] Pollio loves our Muse, although she is rustic. Muses of Pieria: feed a steer for your reader. [M] *Pollio is also composing new songs himself*: feed a bull of a kind that is already tossing his horn and stirring up the sand with its hooves. [D] Pollio, suffer *him who loves you* to come to the place where you too find pleasure. May honey flow for him, and the rough bramble bear exotic spices. [M] Let him who does not hate Bavius *love your songs*, Mevius; and may he yoke foxes and milk billy-goats!

As we saw in the earlier citation from this eclogue, which pitted Jupiter's "love" for a singer against Apollo's, the verb *amare* with the personal pronoun as object in this latter context (qui *te* Pollio *amat*) conveys the idea of a favorable critical reaction to a poet's composition—a meaning that is intended to cap the rival claim of Damoetas that makes the Muse the object of the same verb (Pollio *amat … nostram Musam*), while looking also to Pollio as ultimate arbiter of poetic quality. There is a slight nuance in Menalcas' counter-claim by which he seeks to gain an edge in the rivalry for Pollio's poetic affection/approval; for whereas Damoetas asserts that the sublime critic is delighted with his verse (*Musam*), despite its bucolic cast (*rusticam*), his competitor goes a step further and represents Pollio as doing the actual composing: "Pollio et ipse facit nova carmina" ("Pollio is composing new songs himself").[9] The conceit of the approving critic as *amator* is further sustained in the final couplet in the round where both singers set up the fictitious bards, "Bavius" and "Mevius" (the type of the poetaster) as foil to those true poets who stir the passion of Pollio (the model of the superior poet-critic).

[9] I interpret the meaning to be: "Pollio is directly involved in my poetry-making"—with wordplay in *facit* on the Greek verb *poiein* (to compose, fashion [poems]). In other words, the conceit implies that Pollio has assumed the persona of the singer.

The relevance of the trope of "passion for poetry" to the wider bucolic scaffolding is subtly reinforced by the cross-reference to the metaphor of "shepherding" as poetic activity. The metaphor, which apparently originates in the Cyclops Idyll of Theocritus (see our discussion of *Ecl.* 2, above, Ch.6) is here re-adapted in the pair of requests that the competing minstrels in *Ecl.* 3 make of the Pierian muses. The calf (*vitula*) that the Muses are asked to feed for their readership ("uitulam lectori pascite uestro": "feed a calf for your reader") may be read as allegory for the poetic composition—a point not lost on the respondent who, in his turn, calls upon the Muses in similar language: "*feed a bull* of a kind that is already tossing his horn" ("*pascite taurum,*/ iam cornu petat"). The bucolic activity of "feeding" the domesticated animals (calf, bull) on the part of the invoked Muses is clearly a counter in the metapoetic code of the eclogue. Behind the animal metaphors may be a latent reference to sacrificial victims (figuratively, rather than literally, conceived).[10] In retrospect, then, it is plausible to read the "feeding" trope as also operative in the cryptic response of the anonymous *deus* to the Tityrus of *E.*1: "*feed your cows* as before" ("*pascite*, ut ante, *boves*"). The resumption of "bucolic" activity may be taken as implicitly inclusive, on the figurative plane, of a resumption of poetic activity. Such a resumption is precisely what we see in Tityrus' rehearsals (cp. *meditaris*) in the opening hexameter of the collection, and Vergil interlinks this emblematic posture with the programmatic statement of the "disavowing" poet of *E.*6 by a transparent cross-reference (where the verse, "*agrestem tenui meditabor* harundine *Musam*" [6.8] is clearly intended to recall "*silvestrem tenui Musam meditaris* avena" [1.2]).

The figure of thought that may be labeled *amor poeticus* or "literary passion" (whether it be conceived as passion for his poetic theme on the part of the composer or passionate attraction to a composition on the part of the reader) is by no means unique to the Eclogues in the Vergilian corpus. The phrase *captus amore* recurs prominently in the plural in a passage in the Georgics where the poet employs it (in reference to himself) in a "break-off" motif (3. 284–285):

> Sed fugit interea, fugit inreparabile tempus,
> singula dum *capti* circumuectamur *amore*.

[10] The animals being fattened for sacrifice are to be interpreted at the strictly metaphorical level (Pierian Muses do not themselves literally engage in feeding animals for sacrifices on behalf of mortals).

> But meanwhile time is flying, irretrievable time, while we, *in the grip of passion*, are navigating every detail of our topic.[11]

In describing his desire to move on to a new topic a few lines later, he slightly varies the diction of the trope, replacing *capere* (seize) with *raptare* (carry off) (291–292):

> sed me Parnasi deserta per ardua *dulcis*
> *raptat amor*
>
> but *a sweet desire carries me off* over the deserted slopes of Parnassus

It is particularly pertinent to our discussion that the digression which the poet of the Georgics is formally bringing to a close in the passage cited has been centered on the theme of sexual desire (*amor*) as it occurs most intensely in the animal kingdom. The entire excursus is prefaced by the general observation (242–244):

> omne adeo genus in terris hominumque ferarumque
> et genus aequoreum, pecudes pictaeque uolucres,
> in furias ignemque ruunt: *amor omnibus idem*.
>
> every race on earth without exception—men and wild beasts, marine species, herds of cattle, brightly-colored birds—rush furiously into the fire: *sexual desire is common to them all.*

The portrayal of *amor*, then, in the context of the Georgics passage, is framed by a prefatory gnome (at the literal level) on the universality of a furious erotic drive in all creatures, and a closing motif employing the figure of the poet passionately engaged in the theme of *amor* (at the figurative level) (*capti* circumvectamur *amore*).

To resume our analysis of the prologue of *Ecl.* 6: the second (physical) connotation latent in the expression, *captus amore*, is endemic to the genre of Roman amatory elegy. Vergil's poetic contemporaries were demonstrably conversant with the figures and motif clichés conventional to Hellenistic erotic verse, particularly those in circulation in the genre of epigram. An image imported from the popular *Garland of Meleager*, for instance, opens the curtain on Propertius first book of love-elegies—a genre notably pioneered in the Latin tradition by Cornelius Gallus, the very poetic persona that Vergil parades on the bucolic stage in both *Ecl.* 6 and 10. The love-smitten speaker of Propertius begins his *carmen* with a hexameter that flags the iconic trope of his having been "captured" by the eyes of his *amata*,

---

11 "*Circumvectamur* is a metaphor either from sailing or riding …" (Page ad loc.).

Cynthia: "Cynthia prima suis *miserum me cepit* ocellis:" ("Cynthia was the first *to capture wretched me* with her eyes").[12] The bivalence, at the figurative level, in Vergil's arch defining of his imagined ideal reader in *Ecl.* 6 as *captus amore* would certainly not have been lost on a cultivated readership that included the likes of Pollio, Horace, Varus,[13] and, principally, Gallus, who is honored in the poem in extremely flattering terms.

The Silenus-song, which occupies roughly half the length of the eclogue, is preceded by a light-hearted narrative episode in which the ethos of the internal performer is amusingly sketched. The facetious bagatelle on the binding of the drunken satiric persona by two shepherds, Chromis and Mnasyllus, in collusion with a nymph, Aegle, who together compel him to deliver on his promise to sing, comes to a head in veiled sexual quip that bears on our subject (24–26):

> soluite me, pueri; satis est potuisse uideri.
> carmina quae uultis cognoscite; carmina uobis,
> *huic aliud mercedis* erit.
>
> unbind me, boys; it's enough to have shown what you can do. Learn the songs you desire; the songs are for you; *for her there'll be a another kind of reward.*

Satyrs and *silenoi* are conventionally typecast in Greek art and myth as lustful, and woodland nymphs are their ever-present sexual partners, so the content of Silenus' promised "reward" reserved for the nymph, Aegle (who is described as "most beautiful of the Naiads" ["Naiadum pulcherrima": 21]) does not pose an interpretive challenge. The type of casual sexual liaison implied in Silenus' innuendo exemplifies what we have characterized as "natural" in our discussion of the dual (Epicurean-derived) conception of erotic *voluptas* in relation to *Ecl.* 2 (above, pp. 104–105). Satyrs and nymphs in the train of Dionysus are conceived as embodying an attitude to sex that is antithetical to the pathological *insanus amor* illustrated, inter alia, by

---

[12] The diction of the entire couplet has been shown to imitate a well-known Meleager epigram. For documentation, consult commentaries of Camps (1967) and Postgate (1926) ad line 1.

[13] I refer to Quintilius Varus, poet-critic and friend of both Vergil and Horace, who is reputed to have been a member of the Epicurean circle in the Bay of Naples (see *RE* sub "Quintilius Varus Cremonensis"; Janko (2000) p. 6, note 8, with references cited). Though there is a growing consensus among modern philologists that the Varus named in 6 is to be identified as L. Alfenus Varus (see Coleman; Clausen ad loc.), it is noteworthy that the exclusion of Quintilius Varus is based solely on our lack of evidence of outstanding military exploits on his part. We are, however, dealing with a disavowal (*recusatio*) of an encomium—a genre that thrives on rhetorical exaggeration.

the typical elegiac *amator*.[14] In their conception of erotic desire and of the pleasure it is capable of affording when appropriately fulfilled, the Epicureans notably discriminated between "pure" and "mixed" forms of pleasure (*voluptas*). Lucretius sets forth the orthodox position on this dual taxonomy in the passage that stands as epigraph to this chapter (*DRN* 4.1076–1079):[15]

> Nec Veneris fructu caret is qui vitat amorem,
> sed potius quae sunt sine poena commoda sumit;
> *nam certe purast sanis magis inde voluptas*
> *quam miseris.*
>
> Nor does one who avoids unhealthy love lack the enjoyment of Venus, but rather he reaps those advantages that are without penalty; *for a purer pleasure is thereby guaranteed to healthy than to love-sick persons.*

As we pointed out in our introductory chapter, Vergil is no more concerned to transmit orthodox Epicurean doctrines than he is implying a naïve belief in the actual existence of nymphs and satyrs.[16] However, he obliquely represents, via the dialogue part he ascribes to the persona of Silenus, an erotic dichotomy in terms that reflect the underlying dualistic idea of a care-free sexual relationship (e.g between satyr and nymph), to be played off against dangerously obsessive and unhealthy passion. Thus the comic prelude with its hedonistic model predicates a variety of sexual *voluptas* that will function as foil to the mythographic *erotica pathemata* that Silenus will sketch in his promised verse. Before we turn to a partial analysis of *amor* as it is thematized in the Silenus-song, a preliminary glance at other aspects of the singer's *ethos* is appropriate.

In addition to the satyr's carefree attitude towards sexual intercourse with nymphs ("Venus in silvis"),[17] the reader receives more than one cue relating to his status as a thinking person behind the mask of the shallow hedonist. The first of these consists in the verb *cognoscere* ("learn, get to know") that Silenus uses to unveil his deferred songs: "carmina quae

[14] I interpret the epithet in the phrase *insanus amor* in a restrictive sense ("a love that is insane") rather than a non-restrictive sense ("love, which is insane").

[15] See Smith (1982) 358, note b (with references cited). See further elaboration of this conceptualization in Brown (1987) 108–118. Cicero derides the Epicureans for their—in his view, inconsisitent—espousal of the advantages of anxiety-free sexual indulgence at *Tusc. Disp* 5.33.94.

[16] Lucretius explicitly denies the existence of these creatures of mythological imagination at *DRN* 4.580–594, where he gives an explanation of the origin of such fancies.

[17] *DRN* 5.962.

vultis cognoscite" ("learn the songs you wish [me to sing])": 25. The nuance of "learning" conveyed in *cognoscere* prepares us (both internal and extra-textual audiences) to accept instruction, if not enlightenment, from a poet in the role of teacher or *praeceptor*.[18] It is apposite to compare the motif of the binding of Proteus by the bee-keeper, Aristaeus, in *Georgics* 4, for the elusive figure who reluctantly complies with the demand for illumination in that narrative is presumed to be a repository of knowledge, if not wisdom. The idea of instruction underlying the imperative, *cognoscite*, is recapitulated at the termination of the song, where it is revealed that Silenus has been transmitting a repertoire of compositions that ultimately derive from the divine bard Apollo himself (82–84):

> omnia, quae Phoebo quondam meditante beatus
> audiit Eurotas *iussitque ediscere lauros*,
> ille canit …
>
> All the songs that the fortunate Eurotas heard once upon a time from Apollo's performances *and ordered the laurel trees to learn*, he sang …

In regard to Silenus as a repository of valuable knowledge, there is a suppletive nuance also in Vergil's redeployment of the *senex/puer* (old/young) dichotomy, which, as we have seen, he often employs in the semiotic code of the Eclogues to suggest a superior insight or wisdom that comes with advanced age. At the very start of the binding episode in *Ecl.* 6 the players, Chromis and Mnasyllos, are labeled *pueri* in an appositional construction that is juxtaposed to the name of Silenus, who is, of course, traditionally cast as an old man ("Chromis et Mnasyllos in antro/*Silenum pueri* somno videre iacentem": "the boys, Chromis and Mnasyllos, saw Silenus lying asleep in a grotto." [13–14]). When Silenus, laughing at the binding trick, demands to be released in exchange for the promised performance, he alludes to the age-gap: "solvite me, *pueri*" ("release me, *boys*"). His elderly status is also underscored in a parenthetical sentence in which his prior evasiveness is mentioned: "nam saepe *senex* spe carminis ambo/luserat" ("for *the old man* had often deluded them both with the hope of a song"). The age-differentiation of players/singers may seem trivial or otiose, were it not for the fact that the dichotomy functions elsewhere in the semiotic ambiance of the eclogues to mark off the *senex* as tantamount to a sage, or at the very least, one who has learnt from long experience and is therefore capable of assuming a

[18] Regarding the pedagogic dimension of Silenus' song, see my remarks on the use of *cognoscere* in the context of the education of the *puer* of 4 (above, pp. 67–68).

more "philosophical" attitude to life's vicissitudes.[19] We are led to expect, in this deceptively light-hearted "binding" episode, a mature singer who, apart from his Orphean credentials as indicated in the dramatic response of the natural audience to his performance (27–29), is also a sly commentator on the human predicament from the standpoint of an observer at the margins (*silenoi* and satyrs occupy a porous border, ontologically speaking, between human and animal).

The figure of the *senex*, Silenus, in sum, functions as a composite sign whose defining elements include esoteric knowledge on the subject of love—knowledge exemplified both in the singer's own life-style and in the cautionary mythological paradigms that he unfolds in the course of his *carmina*. Virgil's sophisticated readership would not have missed the patent analogy with the Socrates represented in Alcibiades' speech in Plato's *Symposium* (215A), where the philosopher is likened to both a Silenus and a satyr.[20] The theme of Eros is, of course, central to that dialogue and to the set speeches that make up its formal armature, but the cluster of motif parallels in the Alcibiades portrayal are too tantalizingly similar to be merely coincidental: Socrates is there compared to a Silenos-figure in so far as he unites "praxis to theory;" in regard to Eros; as an older man his superior knowledge and insight are counterpoised against the impetuosity of the youthful Alcibiades.[21] Whether or not the paradigm of Socrates is obliquely intended by Vergil as a flippant comparandum to the Epicurean sage, the particular cluster of motifs that connect him with Silenus in *Ecl.* 6 invite the reader to extrapolate a covert philosophical dimension in the elliptical love narratives summarized in the reported *carmina*.

Vergil's prologic episode has carefully built up, in Aristotelian phraseology, the "ethos" of the speaker who is on the verge of holding forth in learned song. That construction is further reinforced by the allusive "book-ends" in the form of Lucretian tags by which he encloses the satyr's *carmina*. The first tag is positioned at the commencement of the song in the passage that describes the Orphean effect of the performance: "simul incipit ipse/tum vero *in numerum* Faunosque ferasque videres/ludere" ("Then indeed you could see Fauns and wild beasts playing *to the music's beat*" [27–28]). As Lipka points out, the phrase *in numerum* is "first attested in Lucretius, where

19 Important variations on the *puer/senex* motif dichotomy in the Eclogues are: 1. 46; 51 (Meliboeus/Tityrus); 5. 49 (Mopsus/Menalcas); 9.66 (Lycidas/Moeris).

20 See the insightful discussion of this famous rapprochement in Clay (2000) 69–76.

21 Cp. Bury (1932), p. lx.

it is very common."[22] The other symmetrical book-end is located in the penultimate line of the song in the expression, *dicatur origo*: "his tibi Grynei nemoris dicatur origo" (72), which reproduces a line ending at *DRN* 4.160. As the song unfolds, it becomes clearer how and why these carefully placed Lucretian tags are clues to the interpretation of the intervening ideational content.

The internal song of Silenus is not reproduced in full, rather its content is summarized in the indirect form of an enumeration of themes on Vergil's part. Several of these receive a deictic marker (such as *tum*) indicating their place in the larger narrative scheme. The first theme articulated in the sequence is a mini-cosmogony (31–40), which serves an important rhetorical, as well as philosophical, function. Rhetorically, it establishes the credentials of the speaker as a poet of vatic endowment and breadth of vision. Of no less importance, however, is the fact that it outlines an indisputably Epicurean-derived account that borrows heavily from the technical vocabulary of Lucretius' expository poem.[23] These borrowings are too well documented in the standard commentaries, ancient and modern, to warrant further repetition here. They include key locutions evoking central Epicurean ideas, such as *magnum per inane* (31—in reference to the concept of the void), *semina rerum* (a frequent Lucretian synonym for the atoms that combine with the void to generate all matter); *coacta* (*cogere* is a term common in *DRN* for the collision of atoms in the void); *liquidi ignis* (a characterization of the *aether* unique to Lucretius); the use of *anima* to signify the element of air (a Lucretian usage first attested in Ennius). The net effect of this display of Epicurean knowledge, as mediated by Lucretius, on the part of the embedded singer is to provide a conceptual frame of reference for the ensuing narrative repertoire—more precisely, for a demonstrably Epicurean perspective on the major themes that will predominate in the song.[24]

---

[22] Lipka, 73–75, who also notes that the phrase occurs at *DRN* 2.631 at the identical metrical position in the hexameter. Cp. also Clausen's commentary ad loc. on individual phrases in lines 31–40.

[23] See Lipka loc. cit. for the most succinct account of the adaptations in this passage. cp. also Woodman (1997). There are distinct echoes of the *DRN* in at least two other places in Silenus' cosmogony: (1) the anaphora of *cum* in line 39 is modeled on a passage in *DRN* 2.114–115 (noted by Woodman [1991] p. 92); (2) the locution *rara … animalia* (40) is imitated from *DRN* 2.532. The "philosophical topos" of the amazement of a primeval spectator at the first appearance of the sun occurs also in *DRN* 2.1030–1037, on which see Jacobson [1982] p. 42.

[24] There is a common misperception in the standard commentaries and in the secondary literature to the effect that the cosmogony is, at best, only superficially Epicurean in conception (see, e.g. Coleman on lines 31ff.; Courtney [1990] 102: "the cosmogony is very un-Epicurean"). There is, however, a distinctly eclectic component in orthodox Epicureanism

Cosmogonies are rhetorically crafted mythographic accounts of how the "nature of things" came to assume its perceptible form. By definition, therefore, the creation of the physical cosmos and of the humans, animals and plants that inhabit it are normally predicated on *a priori* assumptions about the constituent elements of nature. In the Silenean miniature cosmogony, it is instructive to observe the terms in which the culminating phenomena—the appearance of the natural environment as we know it—are schematically described (37–40):

> iamque nouum terrae stupeant lucescere solem
> altius atque cadant summotis nubibus imbres,
> incipiant *siluae* cum primum surgere cumque
> rara per ignaros errent *animalia montis*.

> next [he related] how the earth is amazed at the new sun beginning to shine, and rain-showers fall from the clouds now lifted higher, when first *the woods* begin to arise, and *living creatures* roam here and there over *mountains* previously ignorant [of such life-forms].

In this account, which is focalized through a bucolic lens, the woods, *silvae*, are privileged as the first to make their appearance and soon thereafter living creatures (*animalia*) roam through a montane landscape.[25] *Silvae* are, of course, the signature emblem of the bucolic genre in the Eclogues. As Lipka phrases it: "*silvae* is the main metapoetic term of the Eclogues through which Vergil marks his own achievement" (Lipka, p. 30). In light of this symbolism, the primacy accorded to forests is self-serving for Vergil's satyric persona whose very habitat is the woodland. As for "living creatures" (*animalia*), though Silenus is not credited with a primal anthropogony (Pyrrha's stones, which he does mention, bring about the regeneration of humankind after the destruction of the flood), Lucretius' Epicurean account of the life of primitive man after his birth from mother earth famously portrays a leisure time (*otia dia*) in which our distant ancestors performed on reed-pipes in a bucolic *locus amoenus* that is remarkably similar to that described by Meliboeus in *Ecl.* 1.[26]

---

itself (not only in the lapidary cosmogony of Silenus) that allowed it to assimilate basic doctrines from pre-Socratic thought (e.g. Empedocles). On the general question of Epicurean "orthodoxy," see especially Sedley (2007) 139–155. The Vergilian adaptations ascribed to Silenus are by no means restricted to mere style: they use the lexicon forged by Lucretius in the Latin tongue to convey the doctrine of the master.

25 Scholars are divided on the grammar of *cumque* in v. 37 (anaphora or tmesis?) On the Lucretian diction in 6, see further Martini (1986) 324–327.

26 *DRN* 5.1379–1398. Cp. above, p. 36.

It is commonly remarked by modern commentators that the two main recurrent themes in the reported Silenus-song are "love" and "metamorphosis." This typology is on the whole accurate on the surface, though it requires some qualification, since it does not address the disproportion in the treatment of the two themes. A deeper categorization would take into account the perception that the metamorphosis motif often functions as a coda to a tale. A large number of metamorphoses in Ovid's masterwork by that title, for instance, are just as readily classifiable as erotic tales, with the final transformation providing a punctuation mark. As students of folklore and "analyse du récit" are thoroughly aware, the proper categorization of a tale by its presumptively main theme is by no means a given.[27] On analytical grounds it is worth noting that the last two myths that round off Silenus' catalogue are, at bottom, erotic tales that end in catastrophe for the love-object (74–81): Scylla has been the unfortunate target of the sexual libido of the sea-god, while Philomela has been the victim of Tereus' brutal rape. As Coleman ad loc. and others have pointed out, Vergil's Silenus conflates the "two Scyllas" of the mythographic tradition (the Homeric and the Megarian). In all versions of these two tales (involving Scylla and Philomela), there is a violent *amor* that generates the plot and, by extension, the eventual transformation.

Among the elliptical tales involving the dénouement of transformation, there are at least two that contain an erotic component. The tale of Hylas, which is the first to receive a modicum of elaboration, focuses on Heracles' intense despair at the loss of his beloved attendant, whose unfortunate demise is caused by a nymph's fatal desire to copulate with him by drawing him into her pool; the tale of the multiple transformation of the sisters of Phaethon into trees is also drawn into the erotic orbit in a version of the related episode that Vergil adumbrates in a passage of the Aeneid in which Phaethon's *amator*, Cycnus, is figured (10.185–193). Cycnus' excessive grief at the death of his beloved and his transformation into a swan are laid at the door of Amor (188: "crimen, Amor, uestrum:" "the fault, Amor, of you and your ilk") and the tale is an illustration of a pathetic love (*maestus amor*) (189–193):

> namque ferunt *luctu* Cycnum *Phaethontis amati*,
> populeas inter frondes umbramque sororum
> dum canit et *maestum* Musa solatur *amorem*,
> canentem molli pluma duxisse senectam
> linquentem terras et sidera uoce sequentem.

[27] Davis (1968).

> For they say that Cycnus *out of grief for his beloved Phaethon*, while he was engaged in song as solace for his *baneful love* amid the shade of his sisters' poplar leaves, took on with his soft plumage the white color of age as he left the earth beneath and followed the stars with his voice.

Vergil imparts a quasi-bucolic color to this love story-cum-metamorphosis by placing the singing Cycnus in the shade (*umbra*) of poplar trees.

Finally, there is also a detectable erotic subplot in the culminating reference to Apollo's compositions on the banks of the Eurotas, which is a site of the god's infatuation with his mortal lover, Hyacinthus (82–84):[28]

> omnia, quae Phoebo quondam meditante beatus
> audiit Eurotas iussitque ediscere lauros,
> ille canit …

> All the songs that the fortunate Eurotas heard long ago from the rehearsing Apollo and ordered his laurels to learn he sang …

In a synoptic view of the contours of Silenus' thematic program (the *omnia* that are transmitted from Apollo's rehearsals,) the most visible peak is certainly that of *amores*.[29] This conclusion is not the result of a merely numerical calculation based on a (re)classification of recurrent themes. Of greater moment is the circumstance that the longest and most elaborated myth in the catalogue is the pathetic tale of Pasiphae's deranged erotic desire for the bull sent by Poseidon (45–60).

This famous vignette of a demented *amor* is representative of a particular view of human infelicity as revealed in the lineaments of a slanted mythopoesis. Vergil's fictional delegate, Silenus, assimilates the type of passion that racks Pasiphae to the *amor* that possessed Corydon and his literary ancestor, Polyphemus (45–47):

> et *fortunatam*, si numquam armenta fuissent,
> Pasiphaen niuei solatur amore iuuenci.
> *a, uirgo infelix, quae te dementia cepit*!

> Next he offers solace to Pasiphae on account of her desire for the snow-white bull—a *happy person*, if only herds had never existed! Ah, unhappy girl, *what madness has taken hold of you*?

The salient cross-reference to the *dementia* of Corydon is Vergil's means of highlighting the pathological variety of *amor* that is the polar opposite

---

28 See Page ad loc.

29 *Omnia* (v. 84) does not introduce a new thematic unit, as some recent commentators have suggested, but rather it summarizes the entire thematic catalogue and brings it to a close.

of the “natural” sexual *voluptas* in the Epicurean conception. The extreme infelicity that Pasiphae experiences as a consequence of her demented passion is tied to her “error,” both physical and psychological, as Vergil emphasizes by anaphora in the repetition of the apostrophe “a virgo infelix” (52):

> *a virgo infelix*, tu nunc *in montibus erras*
>
> Ah *unhappy girl*, you are now *wandering among the mountains*.

In the Pasiphae vignette the pathological dimension of her *amor*—her psychic derangement—is egregious and easy to grasp. In the didactic subtext of the Silenus-song, however, the critique of deluded *amor* extends to *all* varieties of immoderate infatuation for a single *amatus*, and not merely to those spectacular cases of abnormal desire, such as Pasiphae’s yearning for trans-species coitus. According to this implied critique, the other stories delineated from the satyr’s storehouse of erotic tales are deemed to be *exempla* of a type of *amor* that leads invariably to infelicity.

At the center of the internal catalogue in which the theme of *amor* is preponderant stands the famous episode of the induction of Gallus into the Bucolic equivalent of a poetic hall of fame (64–74). Although this episode has appeared to many readers across the ages as an incongruous and digressive intrusion into the embedded song, I propose to defend the minority view that the Gallus cameo is fundamentally coherent with the undercurrent of ideas relating to erotic adversity that are explored in the rest of the poem.

Gallus’ appearance on the scene is indeed abrupt, and is introduced as an adventitious, even casual, turn of events (64–65):[30]

> tum canit, *errantem* Permessi ad flumina Gallum
> Aonas in montis ut duxerit una sororum
>
> then he sings of Gallus *wandering* by the streams of Permessus—how one of the sisters led him to the slopes of Aonia

To all appearnaces, the contemporary poet and close friend of Vergil has wandered—ostensibly by coincidence—into a very famous Boeotian haunt of the Muses, where he is conducted into the exalted company of Apollo and his entire chorus. On closer inspection, however, it is salient that Gal-

[30] Woodman (1997), following Scaliger and Heyne, makes a highly plausible case for transposing the Gallus episode to the end of the catalogue. Since our analysis is paradigmatic in approach, rather than syntagmatic, the episode’s place in the sequence does not affect our argument about erotic typology.

lus' "wandering" (*errantem*) is anything but innocuous: rather it is fraught with literary echoes reverberating from the erotic sphere. As we have noted earlier, the motif of wandering (*error*) is associated in several passages in the Eclogues with the disoriented behavior of the distraught lover in search of the elusive object of his desire.[31] There is no need, however, for the investigator to stray beyond the borders of this eclogue to track the erotic *error* motif, for there is an intra-textual correspondence that makes its presence inescapable. In the Pasiphae vignette the love-crazed queen is described as "wandering on the mountains" (52: "tu nunc *in montibus erras*"). This phraseology is strikingly close to that applied to Gallus wandering near Permessus and being led to the Aonian mountains ("*errantem* … Aonias in montes"). Given the proximity of the two descriptions, it is difficult to disassociate the "wanderings" of both figures and not pursue the question of a common denominator. Since the context of Gallus' wandering is his imminent literary induction into the canon of great poets, the attentive reader cannot fail to make the connection between his *error* and his claim to fame as a poet.

As is very well known, Gallus' reputation as a poet was established by his pioneering contribution to the emergent genre of Latin erotic elegy—a genre in which the authorial persona is conventionally self-fashioned as a hapless *amator* in the throes of an immoderate and demented passion.[32] He enters the stage of the sixth eclogue, then, *qua* representative *par excellence* of amatory verse, and in that role is by fictional convention presumed to be in the grip of a passionate love-affair that has generated his elegies. The mythopoetic "wandering" of Gallus by the banks of the Permessus is therefore equivocal in its signification: it is a double reference to presumptive erotic experience (as mediated in his amatory elegies), and to his inclusion in a bucolic poem in which he is about to receive extraordinary laurels. To comprehend the full implications of the latter, it is necessary to take into account a celebrated event in the literary history of the period.

Gallus is attested to have been the dedicatee of a collection of tales (or plot summaries) by the influential Greek émigré, Parthenius, which he called *erotica pathemata*.[33] As we learn from the preface, the collection was

---

[31] Cp. especially the errant Corydon of 2. 1–5.

[32] Among the most thorough treatments of the poetic œuvre of Gallus, see the meticulously researched account in Lightfoot (1999) 59–76; 215–217 (with copious literature cited therein). On the latter-day recovery of a fragment of Gallus' poetry, see especially Anderson/Parsons/Nisbet (1979). See also Courtney (1993) 259–470. The attribution to Gallus has not, however, been universally accepted.

[33] For the text of the dedication, consult the authoritative edition of Lightfoot (1999) 309.

offered to Gallus as a storehouse of narratives to be used in either hexameter or elegiac poems. As its title implies, the unifying theme of the repertoire is *eros*, and whether or not we chose to believe that Gallus went on to write also in the genre of epyllion (presumably in hexameters), we can at least be absolutely certain that he wrote love elegies of the kind imitated by his main Augustan successors in the genre: Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid. The induction episode on Helicon makes sense in terms of a projected trans-generic excursion into the realm of bucolic poetry—an excursion that Vergil is here proposing to his talented composer/friend who has been hitherto identified as the chief practitioner, indeed the founder, of Augustan amatory elegy.

Vergil dramatizes the imagined generic extension on the part of Gallus in conventional terms as a future program orchestrated, if not actually commissioned, by the Muses, and he makes it clear that the bucolic *vade mecum* is at stake by emphasizing the presence of Linus at the induction ceremony and by allocating to the latter persona the role of encouraging Gallus to write a poem on the origin of the Grynean grove (67–73):

> ut Linus haec illi diuino carmine pastor
> floribus atque apio crinis ornatus amaro
> dixerit: 'hos tibi dant calamos (en accipe) Musae,
> Ascraeo quos ante seni, quibus ille solebat
> cantando rigidas deducere montibus ornos.
> his tibi Grynei nemoris dicatur origo,
> ne quis sit lucus quo se plus iactet Apollo.'

> [he sang] how Linus, a shepherd of divine song, his hair decorated with a wreath of flowers and bitter parsley, declared: 'These reed-pipes—receive them—are the gift to you from the Muses, the same that they gave once to the old native of Ascra, by which he would draw the stiff ash-trees down from the mountains as he sang. With these you are to recount the origin of the Grynean grove, so that there be no other wood in which Apollo exults in greater measure.'

Linus is here quite pointedly given the label, *pastor*, and his intimate connection with the mythical genesis of bucolic poetry has also been previously underlined in *Ecl.* 4 (55–59), where he is said to be a son of Apollo in a context that equates him with the archetypal Pan.

We can therefore assume that the anticipated compositional turn being urged on the elegist, Gallus, is meant to be not only aetiological, but also to be located in the bucolic genre. But what of its projected theme? As we noted above in our discussion of the category of "metamophosis," "aetiology" tells us nothing substantive concerning the narrative content of the poem, since, like the event of transformation, it constitutes the episodic

cap of the story in which it occurs. In the surrounding thematic context of *Ecl.* 6, the assumption of an *erotic content* to the envisaged poem is, in my view, compelling. This interpretation of the presumed content of the Gallus experiment is most succinctly propounded by Lyne, who understood that if "the tenor of the stories in *Ecl.* 6" is properly taken into account, then we should expect the *origo* of the Gryneian grove to be derived from an amorous escapade of the god Apollo. On the basis of this cogent inference, he very plausibly suggests that the obscure tradition preserved by a scholiast concerning a sexual liaison between Apollo and the Amazon, Gryne, is an excellent candidate for the narrative poem.[34] In this regard, it is perhaps not irrelevant that the proper name, Gryne, may be read as the personification of a Greek synonym for the plant, frankincense, and would accord neatly with the mythical pattern of Apollo's lovers who undergo metamorphosis into vegetation (e.g. Daphne; Hyacinthus).[35] Be that as it may, the erotic leitmotif recurring in the Silenus-catalogue strongly suggests that the narrative poem that the bucolic figure, Linus, is confident will delight Apollo is probably to be imagined as a thematic complex consisting of *aetion*, metamorphosis and, last but not least, *amor*.

Since there has been a welter of scholarly opinions concerning the putative genre and subject of the commissioned poem on the origins of the Grynean grove, it is imperative that we review evidence internal to the Eclogue itself to support the hypothesis of a projected composition taking the form of an erotic tale cast in a bucolic mode.[36] In re-tracing clues leading to a convergence, or intersection, of erotic theme and bucolic genre, let us revert to the opening "generic disavowal." Vergil there defines his model reader, as we have seen, to be anyone who is "captus amore." The apodosis of the conditional sentence in which that key phrase appears leaves no doubt that the alternative to heroic verse that will be amply "bucolic" in nature (10–12):

te nostrae, Vare, myricae,
te nemus omne canet; nec Phoebo gratior nulla est
quam sibi quae Vari praescripsit pagina nomen.

---

[34] Lyne (1978) 186. The scholiastic source is Servius Auctus on *Aen.* 4. 345. Cp. Courtney (1990) 109.

[35] See L&S under *gryne*.

[36] As is all too often the case, Servius has spawned scholarly speculation in a direction tangential to the poem, much of it centered on the unverifiable influence of the poet Euphorion of Calchis. For details on the controversy surrounding this author's work in relation to 6, see especially Lightfoot (1999) 61–67; Courtney (1990).

> *Of you, Varus, our tamarisks, of you the entire grove will sing*; nor will any page be more pleasing to Phoebus than one inscribed at its head with the name of Varus.

At the outset, then, the program of this outer, framing eclogue-in-progress is predicated on the conjunction of erotic theme and bucolic genre, and the declaration that the entire grove (*nemus omne*) will take part in the performance is closely followed by an assertion that the model reader, Apollo, will derive unparalleled pleasure from the song. This suture of motifs is recapitulated at the close of the inner, embedded song of Silenus, where *lucus* (grove) corresponds to *nemus*, and the god's intense pride indicates his pleasurable response to the projected poem of Gallus (72–73):

> his tibi Grynei nemoris dicatur origo,
> ne quis sit lucus quo se plus iactet Apollo.

> With these you are to recount the origin of the Grynean grove, so that there be no other wood in which Apollo exults in greater measure.'

If we accept as valid the inference that the subject of a Grynean grove *aetion* harbors an erotic intrigue of Apollo, then we are faced with a close correspondence between the two poems projected in both the inner (Silenus') and the outer (Vergil's) frame—a nexus of motifs that associate the poetic program of the Linus injunction with that articulated in the prelude. Tying the two programmatic frames together is the positive critical response of the model reader, Apollo qua *amator*, who has been firmly planted in a bucolic locus.

To conclude our thematic analysis: *Ecl.* 6 constructs, through the mask of the sage, Silenus, a mythographic schema that is deeply grounded in the philosophical ambit of Epicurean thought regarding the emotion of *amor* in its negative aspect. Against the view of those eminent scholars who interpret the repertoire of adumbrated tales as a departure from, if not a contradiction with, Epicurean principles, a model reader—defined (by Vergil) as one who approaches the poem *captus amore*—will certainly have grasped the implicit *critique* of pathological sexual desire that constitutes the undercurrent of ideas in the embedded song and in its symmetrical frame. What Silenus reveals to his youthful bucolic captors and their co-conspirator, the nymph Aegle, is the secret of erotic infelicity "writ large" in an embedded master-narrative. Vergil's persona chooses a vast cosmic stage on which to demonstrate, by way of negative *exempla*, the perils of mad, unbridled passion—the *dementia* that is fatal to the equanimity compass of the unenlightened lover.

CHAPTER EIGHT

"ECQUIS ERIT MODUS?": THE VERGILIAN CRITIQUE OF ELEGIAC *AMOR* (*ECL.* 10)

> They [Epicureans] do not believe that the wise man will fall in love …
>
> Diogenes Laertius[1]

> Alas: deeply unhappy in love you truly are (*dyseros*) and utterly without recourse (*amechanos*)
>
> Theocritus[2]

In the final bucolic of the collection (*Ecl.* 10), Virgil extends his elaborate critique of Elegiac *amor*, which he saw through an Epicurean lens as a prime example of demented passion (*insanus amor*) leading inexorably to pain, rather than genuine pleasure. He accomplishes this culminating interrogation (*extremus labor*) of pathological passion through the brilliant rhetorical strategy of making Gallus, the very inventor of Latin erotic elegy, enact his own emotional drama of fantasy-projection followed by disillusionment. By this structural means, the Vergilian critique of unbridled *eros* is indirectly mediated through the persona of the elegiac *amator* himself. In the closing verses of the poem, Vergil alleviates the impact of his comprehensive critique by generously consoling Gallus for his pain and suffering at the cruel hands of Amor: he offers his poet-friend a compensatory form of *amor*—a superior love of a "poetic" variety that will guarantee him a greatly increased posthumous reputation.

A preliminary unpacking of the dense programmatic prelude (1–8) will provide us with a secure basis from which to trace the interplay of ideas regarding the nature of *amor*:

> Extremum hunc, Arethusa, mihi concede laborem:
> pauca meo Gallo, sed quae legat ipsa Lycoris,
> carmina sunt dicenda; neget quis carmina Gallo?

---

[1] *DL* 10.118: ἐρασθήσεσθαι τὸν σοφὸν οὐ δοκεῖ αὐτοῖς·

[2] Theocr. 1.84: ἆ δύσερώς τις ἄγαν καὶ ἀμήχανος ἐσσί.

sic tibi, cum fluctus subterlabere Sicanos,
Doris amara suam non intermisceat undam,
incipe: sollicitos Galli dicamus amores,
dum tenera attondent simae uirgulta capellae.
non canimus surdis: respondent omnia siluae.

Grant me, Arethusa, this final labor of love: I must compose a modest song for my dear Gallus—but of the sort that his darling Lycoris herself may read; who would deny Gallus the gift of a song? begin the strain, then! In exchange, may bitter Doris fail, as you glide beneath the waves of Sicily, to intermingle her salt current with your waters. Let us recount the troubled loves of Gallus, while the snub-nosed goats are cropping tender shrubs. We do not sing to deaf ears: the woods are keenly responsive to our every song.

Vergil's prominent choice of Arethusa as muse of his closing bucolic reflects an ingenious confluence of generic and thematic currents in the Eclogues as a whole. As several prominent critics have remarked, the translocation of the nymph, Arethusa, from Greece to Sicily symbolically registers Vergil's adaptation (and transmutation) of Theocritean bucolic, which, by literary-historical tradition, is native to Sicily. In the antecedent Greek tradition of bucolic verse, Arethusa had been named as "the source of pastoral song" already in an epigram of Moschus; while the dying Daphnis of Theocritus' first Idyll had couched his exit from the bucolic world in terms of a valediction to Arethusa.[3]

Complementing the *generic* dimension of her submarine transfer to Sicily is the equally significant *thematic* undercurrent of erotic infelicity. Daphnis' valediction in the Theocritus passage occurs as the dénouement of a tale in which his suffering and death have been caused by a punitive Aphrodite, smarting from rejection of her passion for the handsome shepherd. The nymph Arethusa's ultimate fate is no less erotically motivated: prior to her violent translocation, she has been the victim of the lustful pursuit of the river-god, Alpheus. According to the well-known myth (most famously recounted in the variant we find later in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*), the nymph was converted into a river in response to her prayer to her father in the desperate hope of eluding Alpheus' erotic aggression. As a victim/refugee of unwanted amatory advances, then, Arethusa is well positioned to be the Sicilian muse who will determine the course of a poem that thematizes unbridled sexual desire.

[3] See Clausen ad line 1 for ample documentation of Arethusa's hoary role as bucolic muse.

The genealogy of Arethusa is no less relevant to her overall credentials: she is descended from the sea-god Nereus and his consort Doris. Since the Nereids (the female offspring begotten of this oceanic pair) are closely associated in myth with the amatory sphere, the oath that the poet makes to Arethusa in exchange for her compositional compliance ("may bitter Doris fail, as you glide beneath the waves of Sicily, to intermingle her salt current with your waters") may be read as subtly harboring an erotic *double entendre* (the simple form of the verb, *miscere* [*mingle*], commonly occurs in Lain literature with the connotation of sexual intercourse). Of course, Vergil's wish on her behalf (and on that of the current poem) is primarily that she make the transition to Italy safely by keeping her fresh riverwater uncontaminated, but given her extreme circumstances (erotic pursuit by the ardent Alpheus; vulnerability as Nereid passing through ancestral waters) we would be negligent readers indeed if we attempted to decouple her distressful experience of escaping rape from the issue of her appropriateness as muse for *Ecl.* 10.[4]

Vergil's proem calls upon Arethusa to join him in composing a modest poem "for my dear Gallus" (*meo Gallo*). The possessive pronoun often carries affectionate, if not amorous, connotations; in this context, however, the endearment is nuanced. Vergil is here alluding to a relationship of the kind I have been labeling "poetic *amor*"—a conceit that is recapitulated towards the end of the poem.[5] This metaphorical "love" between poets is to be carefully distinguished, taxonomically, from the "troubled loves of Gallus" (*sollicitos Galli amores*) that are announced as the theme of the eclogue. The latter category of amatory experience—a form of madness that produces unlimited anxiety and pain—is to be the subject of psychological exploration in the setting of the unfolding bucolic performance ("while the snub-nosed goats are cropping tender shrubs").

As in the programmatic *Ecl.* 6, which also features Gallus in the role of love-sick poet, Vergil is careful to define his ideal audience in advance of this variation on the theme of *erotica pathemata*. Apart from the attentive woods (*silvae*), whose responsiveness to the present song authenticates its "Orphean" quality, the poet directs his composition both to the dedicatee, Gallus, and to the latter's *amata* and elegiac muse, Lycoris (cp. "but

---

4 *Pace* Coleman ad loc., there is no tactless "hectoring" in the tone of the speaker's oath. Such reciprocal requests ("so grant me X in exchange for Y") represent conventional staged negotiations between poet and muse over the content of the poem in progress.

5 See our treatment of this recurrent conceit in the preceding chapter above, pp. 126–127.

[a poem] of the sort that his darling Lycoris herself may read": "sed quae legat ipse Lycoris"). The signal inclusion of Lycoris as prospective reader is doubly suggestive in metapoetic terms: she is expected to derive pleasure from a song in which she is a central *dramatis persona* (cp. the ideal reader of *Ecl.* 6: "si quis captus amore leget"); at the same time, her very pseudonym, based on a cult-epithet of Apollo, marks her off as a conventional *puella* of erotic elegy, an object of obsessive and inconsistently reciprocated desire.[6]

The word *amores* that occurs in the formal statement of the eclogue's theme (*sollicitos Galli amores*) introduces an ambiguity that effectively blurs the already thin line between presumptive autobiography and poetic fiction, since the plural is often used to denote a collection of love-poems in the elegiac genre. Vergil's immediate concern at this point in the poem's argument is primarily with the literary orientation of his friend, hence the plural form most probably alludes to the *poetic representation* of amatory experience in Gallus' *Amores*. The modest poem being presented to Gallus will have as its subject the psychological underpinnings of "anxiety-producing desire" within the cadre of a bucolic scaffolding.

The inter-generic experiment proper—the transposition of the theme of elegiac *amor* to the genre of bucolic—commences with a pathetic appeal to the nymphs (*puellae Naïdes*) who are conspicuously absent from the list of mourners in Arcadia that offer their condolences to the dying Gallus (9–12):

> Quae nemora aut qui uos saltus habuere, puellae
> Naïdes, *indigno cum Gallus amore peribat*?
> nam neque Parnasi uobis iuga, nam neque Pindi
> ulla moram fecere, neque Aonie Aganippe.

> What groves or what meadows were your haunts, O Naiad nymphs, *when Gallus lay dying of an unworthy love*? For neither the heights of Parnassus, nor any of Pindus, nor Aonian Aganippe, caused you to linger.

The question the speaker poses to the Naiads regarding their neglect of the bucolic *locus* unequivocally identifies Gallus' extreme passion in symptomatic terms as an "unworthy love" (*amor indignus*). This critical phrase

---

[6] It is, of course, very probable—in the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary—that Gallus' *Amores originated* the convention of bestowing an Apollonian epithet on the elegiac *amata* (cp. Tibullus' Delia; Propertius' Cynthia.) The "New Gallus" fragment substantiates the onomastic game, but does not absolutely clinch the case for originality on Gallus' part.

establishes an important parallel, within the amatory discourse of the Bucolics, with the plight of the figuratively "dying" Damon in *Ecl.* 8, whose bitter complaint over his erotic infelicity has an undeniably elegiac tonality (18–20):[7]

> *indigno* Nysae deceptus *amore*
> *dum queror* et diuos, quamquam nil testibus illis
> profeci, *extrema moriens tamen adloquor hora.*

> while I, deceived by *an unworthy love* for Nysa, *go on complaining*, and I nonetheless call upon the gods—though their role as witnesses has gained me nothing—*as I lie dying in my final hour.*

It is by means an otiose coincidence that the audience Damon goes on to invoke for his *pathema* is represented by the personified mountain, Maenalus, and the god, Pan, along with other members of the Arcadian habitat (22–25)—sympathizers who will also reappear in the roll-call of Gallus' mourners later in the eclogue. Paramount among those in attendance at the latter's scene of mourning is a flock of sheep, pastoral icons whom Gallus is urged to accept as not unworthy of the occasion, on the grounds that even Adonis was a shepherd (16–18):

> stant et oues circum; nostri nec paenitet illas,
> nec te paeniteat pecoris, diuine poeta:
> et *formosus* ouis ad flumina pauit *Adonis.*

> also present all around are the sheep: they feel no shame on our account, nor should you feel shame on theirs, divine poet; even *handsome Adonis* pastured his sheep beside the rivers.

The elliptical mention of Adonis as a paradigmatic shepherd is consonant with the amatory program, for he was a favorite *amatus* of Aphrodite—an aspect of his fame that is insinuated in the epithet, *formosus*, and aligns him with the archetypal bucolic figure, Daphnis (cp. Daphnis' epitaph at 5.43–44). In most versions of the very ancient Adonis myth, his pathetic demise is famously mourned by the goddess of love. So the deceptively casual allusion to his pastoral activity shelters a narrative nexus that continues the thread of dangerous *amores*: his beauty that attracts Aphrodite as *amator*; his untimely death in the flower of manhood; the goddess' extreme mourning and lamentation.

The list of human and divine visitors (as opposed to personified mountains, plants and animals *in situ*) who come to see the despondent Gallus

---

[7] See above, Ch.6, p. 111.

is headed by humble rustics, including lowly swineherds, and, most aptly, the poet-herdsman, Menalcas (19–20). Thereafter the parade shifts, in order of appearance, to the gods, Apollo, Silvanus and Pan. The operative intertext for the parade of visitors is a passage in Theocritus' programmatic first Idyll which relates how a succession of divine interlocutors come to commune with the moribund Daphnis. A succinct comparison of the Vergilian adaptation with the Theocritean model elucidates a significant difference between the two treatments of the "catalogue of mourners" motif.[8]

In Theocritus the suite of interlocutors is structured so as to come to a climax in an acrimonious and lengthy exchange between a defiant Daphnis and a malevolent Aphrodite who does not conceal her *schadenfreude*. The rhetorical foil to this emotionally charged confrontation between a suffering *amator* and his celestial tormentor is a sequence of compassionate inquiries on the part of two lesser divinities, Hermes and Priapus. Hermes leads off with pointed questions (Id.1.77–78):

> Δάφνι,
> τίς τυ κατατρύχει; τίνος, ὠγαθέ, τόσσον ἔρασαι;
>
> Who torments you Daphnis? Whom do you so passionately desire?

The implication of Hermes' questions is to equate erotic desire with a state of torment. Priapus, in his turn, initially poses a similar question, which is patently rhetorical in his case, since he immediately proceeds to supply details of Daphnis' *amata* after identifying the source of his infelicity (82–85):

> Δάφνι τάλαν, τί τὺ τάκεαι; ἁ δέ τυ κώρα
> πάσας ἀνὰ κράνας, πάντ' ἄλσεα ποσσὶ φορεῖται–
> ……………………………………………………
> ζάτεισ'· ἆ δύσερώς τις ἄγαν καὶ ἀμήχανος ἐσσί.[9]
>
> Wretched Daphnis, why are you wasting away? The girl is wandering by every spring, by every grove, … looking for you. Alas: deeply unhappy in love you truly are and utterly without recourse.

Priapus reveals that the girl whom he loves is wandering in search of him and that he is doomed to infelicity (he is *amechanos*: devoid of recourse).[10]

---

[8] Perkell (1996) contains a perceptive discussion of Vergil's recasting of the Theocritean model.

[9] The refrain (line 84) has been omitted.

[10] On the recurrent "wandering" motif (*error*) in the context of passionate desire see our observations (above pp. 136–137) on the shared experience of Corydon, Pasiphae and Gallus.

The mutually complementary effect of the interventions of these two gods is to diagnose the cause of Daphnis' deplorable state of despair and to recognize the futility of the particular type of dysfunctional *amor* to which he is subject.

Vergil's remodeling of the motif also begins with a procession of visitors who put questions to the distressed *amator*. The Menalcas figure, who, jointly with the shepherds and swineherds, is the first interlocutor, phrases his query in terms that resemble Hermes' concern with the source of the victim's passion in the Theocritus passage: 'unde amor *iste* … tibi?' ('where does that love of yours come from?') (21). There is a subtle new twist in the Vergilian reformulation: the demonstrative pronoun, *iste*, which often carries a negative connotation, here also has an implicitly typological dimension ("that particular form of *amor*").

Apollo, who is next in line, pinpoints the dire affliction of *insanus amor* before going on to informing Gallus of the whereabouts of his *amata*—a bit of intelligence that recalls Priapus' revelation to Daphnis regarding the wanderings of the unnamed *amata* (22–23):

> Galle, *quid insanis*?' inquit. 'tua cura Lycoris
> perque niues alium perque horrida castra secuta est.

> Gallus, *what kind of madness is this*?' he exclaimed. 'your beloved, Lycoris, has followed another man through piles of snow and horrid encampments.

Apollo's representation of Lycoris as having followed Gallus' soldier rival into winter quarters during a military campaign conforms to the conventional Love/War opposition that is basic to the semiotics of Latin amatory elegy (cp. *horrida castra*). This commonplace antimony will reappear in Gallus' own complaint a few lines later in the eclogue.

With the appearance of the woodland deity, Silvanus, on the stage, we are presented with an important figure of the bucolic universe. Although Vergil does not provide him with a script, his very appearance on the scene as a silent witness resonates powerfully with a philosophical subtext that aligns him squarely with Epicurean *sagesse*. As a figure emblematic of mature insight, he is grouped with Pan and the nymphs in the famous "beatitude" passage at the end of *Georgics* 2, which carries unmistakable Epicurean overtones (2.490–494):

> felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas
> atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum
> subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis auari:
> *fortunatus et ille deos qui nouit agrestis*
> *Panaque Siluanumque senem Nymphasque sorores.*

> Blessed is the person who has been able to gain knowledge of the causes of things, and has trampled beneath his feet all forms of fear and pitiless fate and the bedlam of greedy Acheron: *happy also is the person who knows the gods of the countryside, Pan, and old Silvanus, and the sister Nymphs.*

Lucretian proems extolling the achievements of Epicurus are transparently evoked in the excursus that begins with the hexameter, "felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas," ("blessed is the person who has been able to gain knowledge of the causes of things")[11]—an encomium prefacing fervid appeal to the Muses that portrays a sylvan landscape complete with extensive *umbra* (line 489). It is especially pertinent to the philosophical subtext that Silvanus is characterized as *senex*, which, as we have seen in connection with the Silenus figure of *Ecl.* 6, is a vector of the important semiotic opposition, *senex/puer*, that recurs in several passages in the Bucolics. In the didactic discourse of the Georgics passage, the hoary figure of Silvanus alongside that of the god Pan becomes, in the words of Trisoglio: "an emblem of an exalted spiritual tranquility that protects one from all fears in a state of an achieved *ataraxia*."[12]

Silvanus' pregnant silence provides poignant counterpoint to the climactic arrival of the god Pan, who delivers a robust and critical pronouncement concerning the nature of unbridled erotic passion (26–30):

> Pan deus Arcadiae uenit, quem uidimus ipsi
> sanguineis ebuli bacis minioque rubentem.
> '*ecquis erit modus*?' inquit. 'Amor non talia curat,
> nec lacrimis crudelis Amor nec gramina riuis
> nec cytiso saturantur apes nec fronde capellae.'

> Pan, god of Arcadia, whom I have seen with my own eyes, came ruddy with blood-red elderberries and cinnabar. '*Will there ever be an end*?' he said. Amor does not care for such things; you cannot satiate a cruel Amor with your tears, any more than grass with streams, or bees with clover, or she-goats with foliage.

---

[11] The allusion is transparent, not so much at the verbal level, as at the level of ideas (the Epicurean sage who has penetrated the secrets of the universe and freed mankind from the fear of death and the afterlife). See especially the proems to Bk.1. 66–79 (where that major source of unnecessary fear, *religio*, is said to have been trampled underfoot), and to Bk. 3.25; 37 (where the terror of Acheron—a frequent motif in the *DRN*—is overcome by true knowledge). See also our discussion below, pp. 168–169 for a fuller analysis of this passage in the broader framework of Epicurean eudaimonist ethics.

[12] "Silvano e fatto emblema di quella nobile pacatezza dello spirito che, in un' atarassia conquistata, si tutela da tutti i timori." *Enc.Verg*. See under *Silvanus*.

Pan's status as god of Arcadia lends a unique weight of authority to his pronouncements on the nature of Amor/Eros. His brief and trenchant speech encapsulates an underlying philosophical conception that informs a central topic of Vergilian bucolic. That conception is communicated in terms that draw attention to its aphoristic, universalizing character. Pan's opening shot is a virtual remonstrance in the form of a rhetorical question that is the analytical key to the conception of a negative *amor*: "Will there ever be an *end*? (*modus*)?" The idea that love of the insane type (cp. Apollo's *quid insanis*?) is essentially without *limit* (*modus*) lies at the very heart of the critique here ascribed to Pan. This robust articulation of the notion of unbounded desire cannot but recall the words in which the Corydon figure of *Ecl.* 2 (the first of the Bucolics to interrogate the nature of Amor) conducts his self-diagnosis: "quis enim *modus* adsit amoris?" ("what *limit*, I ask, is there to love?"). The cross-reference inter-linking the second and the final eclogue clinches the analogy Vergil is accentuating between the *dementia* of the protagonists, Corydon and Gallus, respectively.

As we have argued in Ch.6 above, the concept that a lack of *modus* (Greek *peras*) is intrinsic to a particular, retrograde variety of erotic passion is a philosophical *topos* that was central to Epicurean taxonomies of human desires.[13] The first of the two epigraphs at the head of this chapter advocates a point of view that has been attributed to the founder: "They [Epicureans] do not believe that the wise man will fall in love." The reason that the sage avoids passionate love is precisely because it belong to a category of desire that cannot be fulfilled or satiated. There is no doubt that Vergil was deeply familiar with this doctrinal stance from his period of study spent in the Epicurean school in the Naples area.[14] The fundamental dichotomy between a natural desire that can be readily fulfilled (and therefore has a fixed term or *modus*) and a desire of an unnecessary and futile type that is insatiable underpins Pan's critique of Amor. As befits the setting of his interrogation of the elegist, he illustrates the property of insatiability in bucolic terms—the infinite appetite of bees for clover and goats for leafy forage. Also emphasized in the gnomic utterances of the Arcadian god is the indifference of Amor (cp. *crudelis*) to the suffering that it brings

13 Limit (*peras*; *modus*) was a fundamental anchor in Epicurean ethics, especially as it pertains to "empty" desires. Consult e.g. Tsouna (2007) 23–24.

14 Janko (2000), p. 6, provides the relevant documentation (including references to Herculaneum papyri texts) for Vergil's connections with Epicurean teachers in the Naples area. Cp. above p. 2, note 2.

upon its victim. Amor (this personification of the emotion is repeated in consecutive lines) is represented as endlessly watered by the boundless tears of the hapless *amator*. A desire that cannot be satisfied is, by definition, compassed by pain in the Epicurean scheme of things; hence the kind of love-pain that Gallus is suffering is anathema to the sage and ought to be eliminated if the capacity for attaining true pleasure (*pura voluptas*) is to be restored to the patient.[15] Pan's ulterior motive in his tough message to the agonized Gallus is, in effect, to initiate cognitive therapy by encouraging him to recognize the futility of his desire and to act on awareness of his *amechania*.[16]

The response of Gallus to the insights proferred most robustly by Pan, reflects a radical failure on his part to grasp, or at least to admit, the grave ramifications of his underlying sickness. What is more damning, he never really makes a sincere effort to engage in therapeutic self-examination in the manner of say, the Corydon of *Ecl.* 2; instead he chooses to indulge in fantasy-projection and superficial escapism. The irony of his flight of fancy is all the more acute in that he ignores the ongoing critique of elegiac *amor* that recurs in Vergilian bucolic. The author of the Eclogues exposes this double failure (at the emotional as well as cognitive levels) right at the commencement of the Gallan response (31–34):

> tristis at ille 'tamen cantabitis, Arcades,' inquit
> 'montibus haec uestris; soli cantare periti
> Arcades. o mihi tum quam molliter ossa quiescant,
> uestra meos olim si fistula dicat amores!'

> But he responded mournfully: 'Arcadians, you shall sing nonetheless, won't you, of these matters to your hilltops. You Arcadians are uniquely skilled in song. O how gently then would my bones lie at rest, if your reed-pipe recounted my loves hereafter!'

Gallus' speech is framed at the outset with narrative clues regarding its tone and substance. The adversative *at* ("but") is a premonition to the reader that Gallus is set to resist any semblance of change, while the epithet, *tristis*, ("mournful") occupying the start of the hexameter, signals that he is emotionally wedded to an elegiac posture of self-pity. The first word he is made to utter is *tamen* ("nonetheless"), and his prime request to the Arcadian

---

[15] For a well-informed and succinct summary of the Epicurean doctrine regarding the limits of desire (and of pain) see Smith (1982) xxxviii–xlii.

[16] On the important difference (for Epicureans) between unacceptable (harmful) and acceptable (painless) forms of desire, see Nussbaum (1994), especially 104–114; 172–188.

singers not only idealizes them as musicians ("*soli* cantare periti" "*uniquely* skilled in song"),[17] but also expresses the forlorn wish for consolation in advance of his own anticipated death. In short, Gallus wants the bucolic poets of Arcadia to adopt an unchanged elegiac program in which they would compose a typically maudlin song of compassion at his "mortuary moment."[18] Far from his desiring their help in transcending his predicament and overcoming his pathological condition, they are being urged simply to transpose his *Amores* into bucolic verse (*vestra fistula*), while leaving intact their ideational content. They are asked to re-perform "my loves" ("*meos* … dicat *amores*")—an expression that alludes to the announced program in the proem to the eclogue, but with a very telling omission: the adjective *sollicitos* ("troubled") modifying the noun *amores* (cp. "sollicitos Galli dicamus amores": 6). In re-proposing the amatory program, Gallus pathetically precludes any hope of potential enlightenment for himself.

This blatant resistance to therapy becomes even more transparent when the founder of amatory elegy starts to elaborate his wish-fulfillment fantasy in the sphere of love affairs. On the surface Gallus appears to be entertaining the innocuous fantasy of a love-relationship that would be carefree and blissful with such partners as "Phyllis" and "Amyntas" (35–41):

> atque utinam ex uobis unus uestrique fuissem
> aut custos gregis aut maturae uinitor uuae!
> certe siue mihi Phyllis siue esset Amyntas
> seu *quicumque furor* (quid tum, si fuscus Amyntas?
> et nigrae uiolae sunt et uaccinia nigra),
> mecum inter salices lenta sub uite iaceret;
> serta mihi Phyllis legeret, cantaret Amyntas.

> And would that I had been one of you [Arcadians] and either looked after your herd or harvested the ripe grape-clusters. Surely I would have a Phyllis or an Amyntas or *some other mad passion* (what would it matter in that situation whether Amyntas was dark? Violets are also dark and so are bilberries) with me among the willows beneath the supple vine; Phyllis would gather wreaths for me, and Amyntas would sing.

The reader is rudely disabused of this naïve illusion of untroubled bliss in a bucolic *locus amoenus* when Gallus paradoxically characterizes the fantasized love-object as *quicumque furor* ("some other mad passion")! This

[17] In 7, 4–5, Corydon and Thyrsis are introduced in the prelude to their singing-match as equally skilled Arcadian musicians. Gallus' compliment to Arcadians as *uniquely* skilled is an exaggeration that is consistent with his fantasy-projections.

[18] Representative of the conventional motif of the "mortuary moment" of the elegiac *amator* are Tibullus 1.3 and Propertius 1.19.

realization that he cannot envisage an *amor* (even a pseudo-utopian one) in terms other than madness (*furor*) is jolting testimony to his cognitive limitations. He repeats the titillatingly pretty names, Phyllis and Amyntas, but the repetition sounds hollow and unconvincing in the context of a misconceived *voluptas*, for it merely reinforces the disconnect between the type of "mad" passion (*furor*) he continues to long for and the species of trouble-free erotic liaison that is outside the orbit of his elegiac universe.

The chasm separating the two incompatible varieties of amatory experience is widened even more by the apostrophe that Gallus abruptly proceeds to make to the absent Lycoris (42–43):

> hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori,
> hic nemus; hic ipso tecum consumerer aeuo.
>
> Here lie cool fountains, Lycoris; here lie soft meadows; here lies a grove; here with you may I be wasted away by time itself.

Phyllis and Amyntas have slipped into oblivion and the Gallan fantasy now turns into a vision of a felicitous and fully reciprocated *amor* with his very own elegiac *puella*, Lycoris. The crowning fulfillment of *amor*, as Gallus (mis)conceives it, takes place not with the imagined bucolic surrogates, but rather with his one and only elegiac *amata* for an indefinite period of time. His fervid appeal to Lycoris to join him in Arcadia (the seductive *hic* [here] is thrice reiterated) cancels out whatever faint shadow of an alternative *voluptas* he has dimly imagined, and closes the door once and for all on any hope of a future cure for his derangement (*furor*).

Gallus' hopelessly confused fantasy of enticing his elegiac *amata* into a seductive sylvan locus is subjected to oblique criticism through the sophisticated Vergilian technique of alluding to a key passage of Lucretius that is germane in several important particulars to the argument of the eclogue. Towards the close of Bk.5 of his poetic monument (lines 1379–1411), Lucretius embarks upon an excursus on the origin of bucolic musical instruments, such as the reed-pipe, in shady woodland settings at a time in the distant past of mankind in which "the *rustic muse* flourished" ("*agrestis* enim tum *musa* vigebat").[19] As a pendant to the idyllic picture he paints of an unalloyed, harmless pleasure in musical performance enjoyed by the "woodland folk" (*silvestre genus*), Lucretius goes on to generalize about man's tendency to give up such easily fulfilled pleasures that are ready to hand in favor of illusory and insatiable pleasures of an increasingly luxurious kind. His

[19] For documentation of this key phrase that Vergil adopted (and adapted) from *DRN*, see Lipka, p. 66.

more general critique culminates in an indictment of vain human striving for pleasures entailing "empty cares" (*curis inanibus*) that fail to be circumscribed by appropriate limits (5.1430–1432):

> ergo hominum genus incassum frustraque laborat
> semper et *in curis consumit inanibus aevum*,
> ni mirum *quia non cognovit quae sit habendi*
> *finis et omnino quoad crescat vera voluptas*.

> Therefore the human race always toils in vain and fruitlessly, *and wastes its time in empty cares*—no wonder, *since it does not understand the limit of possession, and the extent to which true pleasure is actually capable of growing*.

Vergil brings the intertextual dimension into play by the peculiar locution he ascribes to the wishful Gallus, "hic ipso tecum consumerer aevo" ("here with you may I be wasted away by time itself").[20] As often in such overt Vergilian allusions to the *DRN*, the reader attuned to underlying ideas is obliged to recognize that this phraseology is no trivial echo, given the context of the model (the Lucretian account of the flourishing and subsequent decline of primitive woodland life). Epicurus' eloquent Roman disciple here registers the main philosophical objection to empty human striving after false, unlimited pleasures (*curis inanibus*): they are based on a fundamental misperception regarding the nature of fruitful pleasure, which always requires a profound awareness of limit (*finis* = *modus*). In fine, the Lucretian allusion allows Vergil to expose discreetly the shallowness and futility of his friend's erotic fantasy, which falls squarely into the camp of a deep-seated ignorance (cp. Lucretius' *non cognovit*) of the source and limits of true pleasure (*vera voluptas*). The related question (also derivative of the same Lucretian passage) of what circumstances contribute to a healthy *growth* of pleasure (*quoad crescat vera voluptas*) is taken up by Vergil during the eclogue's closing crescendo in which the verb *crescere* is given special prominence through repetition.

The remainder of Gallus' effusion is wholly permeated with amatory *topoi* that are, or are destined to become, conventional to the elegiac genre. The suite begins with the signature opposition between Love and War (44–49):

> nunc *insanus amor* duri te Martis in armis[21]
> tela inter media atque aduersos detinet hostis.

---

[20] Clausen ad loc. notes the idiosyncratic turn of phrase and its Lucretian derivation in *DRN* 5.1431.

[21] The transmitted text reads *me*—a reading that, in my judgment, is manifestly corrupt. I accept Heyne's emendation, *te*, as virtually unassailable (*contra* the views of some eminent philologists). The dramatic coordinates by which Gallus is performing his *querela* are

tu procul a patria (nec sit mihi credere tantum)
Alpinas, a! dura niues et frigora Rheni
me sine sola uides. a, te ne frigora laedant!
a, tibi ne teneras glacies secet aspera plantas!

Now *a mad passion* detains you under arms in the midst of the weapons of harsh Mars, and of opposing enemy lines. You, far from your fatherland (would that I could believe this to be false!), are gazing alone without me at Alpine snows (so harsh are you!) and the chill Rhine. O may the frost not harm you; nor the rough ice cut into your tender soles!

A basic antinomy in the semiotic code of amatory elegy, *amor/bellum*, is commonly elaborated in the contrasting epithets, *mollis/durus* (soft/harsh).[22] Gallus has just characterized the locus of imagined erotic bliss in Arcadia as containing *mollia prata* ("soft meadows"); he now describes the polar sphere of warfare, personified as Mars—Lycoris' present location—as *durus* ("harsh"). Earlier in the poem, no less an authority than the god Apollo had informed Gallus of her present location ('tua cura Lycoris/ perque niues alium perque horrida castra secuta est.': 'your beloved, Lycoris, has followed another man through piles of snow and horrid encampments' [22–23]). Gallus at this turn in his elegiac imagination laments her absence in a winter camp in words that stridently repeat Apollo's painful piece of intelligence. In doing so, he articulates what was to become a motif cliché of Latin erotic elegy: he expresses the wish that she not be harmed by the vicious winter and that her tender soles not be damaged by treading on sharp ice.[23] Like Gallus, Lycoris has succumbed, as a member of an erotic triangle, to her own version of an *insanus amor*—a mad passion of the sort that would lead her to pursue her object of desire (Gallus' soldier rival) into an inhospitable military camp.

At midpoint in his response to his Arcadian audience, Gallus executes a discursive pivot that is registered, at the syntactic level, in a shift from subjunctive moods (expressing his wish-fulfillment fantasies) to future indicatives (indicating his projected changes in life-style). He now sets forth alternative courses of action that he has resolved to pursue. In the first of these, he declares his intention to redirect his muse to the composition of bucolic poetry (50–51):

---

consistent both internally and with the war/love rhetorical opposition: he is nominally situated in Arcadia while Lycoris is with her lover in winter camp. The reading *me* would entail relocating Gallus on a military campaign *at the time of speaking* (*nunc*), and so derailing the poem's argument.

22 See the documentation of the elegiac "mollis" code in Clausen *ad* line 33.

23 The motif recurs most notably at Propertius 1.VIIIa, 7–8.

> ibo et Chalcidico quae sunt mihi condita uersu
> carmina pastoris Siculi modulabor auena.

> I'll go and perform on the oaten pipe of the Sicilian shepherd the poems I composed in Chalcidic verse.

As formulated, this trans-generic program is deeply ambivalent, in so far as it envisages a wholesale transposition of thematic content unaltered (presumably) from one type of verse to another. Modern philologists remain divided over what precise form of poetry is designated by the cryptic "Chalcidic verse."[24] We do know, however, that the speaker plans to re-adapt his former poetry to a brand of bucolic verse that ostensibly (and at least in intention) will follow in the footsteps of Vergil (the diction of "pastoris Siculi modulabor auena" pointedly borrows from the language of the Eclogues). What is equally certain, as revealed in the sequel, is that Gallus' future pseudo-bucolic program, though notionally relocated to the woods, will retain an ineluctable elegiac inflection that marks it as a contamination of bucolic and elegiac conventions. His adoption of a bucolic modality of performance is therefore conceived on a superficial plane, for he sees himself as entering an uncultivated habitat of wild beasts' dens, where he will inscribe his very elegiac-sounding *Amores* (the word is twice repeated at the end of consecutive hexameters) on the bark of trees, and like the not-yet-cured Corydon, he will wander to and fro on the slopes of Arcadian Maenalus (52–55):

> certum est in siluis inter spelaea ferarum
> malle pati tenerisque meos incidere amores
> arboribus: crescent illae, crescetis, amores.
> interea mixtis lustrabo Maenala nymphis

> I prefer (I have decided) to suffer my fate in the woods among the wild beasts' caves, and to carve my love-poems on tender trees: as they grow, so will you grow, my love-poems. Meanwhile I shall patrol the Maenalus along with the local nymphs

This topographic setting—wild and uncultivated—is definitely "alien to the idyllic landscape of the pastoral," and marginal, at best, to the performance loci of Vergilian poets/herdsmen, so even though Gallus's vision includes the pseudo-bucolic motif of carving love-poems on trees, his chosen haunts strike an incongruous note.[25] His new locale does not bear the aura of authenticity, if he is truly to perform in a Vergilian pastoral scene.

---

[24] For extensive literature on the controversy, which takes its point of departure from Servius' assertion that the phrase refers to the poetry of Euphorion of Chalcis, see Courtney (1993) 268–270; Lightfoot (1999) 59–64.

[25] The phrase describing the incongruity of the landscape is from Coleman ad line 58.

Yet another novel activity that the love-lorn Gallus projects for his retreat to Arcadia is the hunting expedition. This motif is also alien to the poets/herdsmen of the Eclogues. In Greco-Roman erotic poetry in a variety of genres (including tragedy), the motif has two distinct functions: either the *amator* hopes to join his/her beloved on the hunt (the *comes* motif), or, conversely, the lover hopes to take up hunting as a cure for his passion (*remedium amoris*).[26] It is the latter function that Gallus acknowledges at the end of his cynegetic vignette, though he does so with full awareness of its ultimate vanity (55–61):

> interea mixtis lustrabo Maenala Nymphis
> aut acris uenabor apros. non me ulla uetabunt
> frigora Parthenios canibus circumdare saltus.
> iam mihi per rupes uideor lucosque sonantis
> ire, libet Partho torquere Cydonia cornu
> spicula—*tamquam haec sit nostri medicina furoris*,
> aut deus ille malis hominum mitescere discat.

> Meanwhile I shall roam the Maenalus hills in the company of the Nymphs, or else I'll hunt fierce boars. No chill weather will prevent me from cordoning off Parthenian glades with a ring of hounds. Already I see myself stomping over rocks and through echoing groves, happily shooting Cydonian darts from a Parthian quiver of horn (*as if this would be a cure for my madness*, or that god would learn to be softer on human misfortunes!).

The parenthetic concession he lets slip at this juncture in his sketch of a future life-style is ripe with significance for the underlying critique of pathological *amor* that we have been adumbrating. Gallus here virtually admits that he is at least subliminally aware of the diagnosis made by Apollo and Pan regarding his disease (a form of *furor*) and, what is even more to the point, he dimly understands that it is, in theory, curable (i.e. that there may exist effective therapies, though hunting is not working for him). The recommended philosophical remedy (*medicina*), however, consists in a cognitive conversion, allied with an act of will, that proves beyond the range of this particular *amator*. Thus, unlike the Corydon of *Ecl.* 2, who shows some degree of enlightenment towards the close of his monologue, Gallus cannot bring himself, upon recognizing the nature of his

---

[26] The motif of hunting activity pursued as *remedium amoris* has predominantly elegiac affiliations (see Clausen ad loc.). There is also a parallel semiotic system that opposes the hunter to the lover, Venus to *Venatio*. For its witty and complicated elaboration in the narrative economy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* see Davis (1983).

dementia, to declare, "I can find another beautiful lover to fulfill my desire." By his own oblique admission, then, he is doomed to remain an uncured patient of *insanus amor*. His poignant admission is therefore tantamount to an inchoate resignation that will cost him deep pain and anguish for the indefinite future.

After acknowledging his abject failure to embrace a viable "therapy for madness" (*medicina furoris*), Gallus rounds off his speech with a peroration that amounts to a valediction to his idiosyncratic efforts at generic transplantation. He now formally abandons his poetic labors (*labores*: cp Vergil's *extremus labor*) in the bucolic woods (*silvae*) (62–69):

> iam neque Hamadryades rursus nec carmina nobis
> ipsa placent; ipsae rursus concedite siluae.
> non illum nostri possunt mutare labores,
> nec si frigoribus mediis Hebrumque bibamus
> Sithoniasque niues hiemis subeamus aquosae,
> nec si, cum moriens alta liber aret in ulmo,
> Aethiopum uersemus ouis sub sidere Cancri.
> omnia uincit Amor: et nos cedamus Amori.

> once more we take no pleasure either in tree-nymphs or even in our very songs; Give way once more yourselves, O woods! Our very labors cannot change that god—not if we were to drink the waters of the Hebrus or to experience Sithonian snows in the chilliest of winter rain-storms; not if, when dying bark dries up on the tall elm-trees, we were to herd Ethiopian sheep beneath the sign of the Crab. Love conquers all: let us too yield to love.

Gallus herewith seals the topic of his *amechania* (his lack of means in the effort to persuade the god, Amor, to adopt a milder, more compassionate, attitude towards human ills) by depreciating the pleasures of the bucolic sphere and the poems it engenders (tree-nymphs—songs—woods—poetic labors). His closing speech-act takes the form of a declaration of surrender (*et nos cedamus Amori*: "let us too yield to love"), preceded by a pithy epigram (*omnia vincit Amor*: "Love conquers all"). As we have previously remarked, a strategically placed *sententia* often functions in the Eclogues to frame a certain philosophical perspective. In this context, the victory of "love", which is not merely the divinity, Amor, but also the personification of the powerful emotion, consists in depriving the loser of all hope of finding an efficacious therapy for his deranged mind.

Gallus' aphorism at the termination of his speech sums up the principle underlying an unhealthy conception of *amor/furor* that rules out the attainment of an anxiety-free (and, by definition, *limited*) enjoyment of erotic *voluptas*. In his postlude to the poem (and, concurrently, to the book of Eclogues), Vergil enunciates a modality of consolation for his friend's

suffering that reflects exquisite tact and grace. He directs an apostrophe of farewell to the Muses of Pieria in chords that are contrapuntal, in a positive sense, to those sounded in his indictment of vulgar *eros* (70–74):

> Haec *sat erit*, diuae, uestrum cecinisse poetam,
> dum sedet et gracili fiscellam texit hibisco,
> Pierides: uos haec facietis maxima Gallo,
> Gallo, *cuius amor* tantum mihi *crescit* in horas
> quantum uere nouo uiridis se subicit alnus.
>
> *It will suffice* for your poet to have sung these songs, O divine Muses of Pieria, while he sat weaving a small basket out of slender hibiscus stalks: you will augment these to the greatest extent for Gallus, Gallus, *whose mutual love grows* as much from hour to hour as the green alder shoots upward in early spring.

In the Eclogues Vergil deploys a limited repertoire of epilogic motifs, of which two favorites are: respect for the potential satiety of the audience (the *koros* motif) and poetic emulation of the declining day by closing the composition (the darkening *umbra* motif).[27] In his rhetorical use of the notion of satiety in the cadence of *Ecl.* 10, the poet expresses his decorous concern to avoid prolonging the song to immoderate length (*haec sat erit … cecinisse*); and in the final line of the poem, the notoriously insatiable grazing goats of Pan's libido analogy (30: *nec saturantur … capellae*) are now declared to be full (76: *saturae*). The metapoetic concern with the potential surfeit of his audience here resonates subtly with the negative quality of *insatiability*, which is conceived as endemic to an unfettered *amor*. The interplay of ideas here serves to cast the singer (as opposed to the lover) in the role of one who knows when to impose *modus* on his conduct.

Vergil, consummate artist that he is, goes one step further in weaving his slender hibiscus basket of a poem with the thematic strands that recur throughout the eclogue. In the closing verses he reverts to the leitmotif of *amor*, this time investing it with the connotation of a "literary" passion. This variety of love represents, as we have stressed above in connection with *Ecl.* 6, a figurative, rather than literal emotion—a sublimation of desire

---

[27] The *koros* ("surfeit") motif is recurrent in the Pindaric epinikion (see especially *SP* p. 29, note 71, along with further references listed in the Index under *koros*). On the two functions of the *umbra* motif in the Bucolics (prologic and epilogic) see above Chapter 2, p. 19, note 4. A variety of the latter type of *umbra* (the word is thrice repeated), described as "heavy" (*gravis*) and noxious to bucolic performers, is employed as closure to the Eclogue-book, as is a reiteration of the notion of satiety: "surgamus: solet esse grauis cantantibus *umbra*,/ iuniperi *grauis umbra*; nocent et frugibus *umbrae.*/ite domum *saturae*, uenit Hesperus, ite capellae."

that will compensate for the unfulfillable passion of the elegiac *amator*.[28] In accordance with this re-conception, Vergil's declared "love" for the poet, Gallus, will exhibit robust growth (the reiterated verb is *crescere*)—a growth in *poetic reputation* that is nurtured by this very *carmen bucolicum*.[29]

The thorough-going critique of elegiac *amor* that informs the configuration of motifs in Vergil's *extremus labor* is shaped by a complex of philosophical conceptions stemming from Epicurean doctrine as mediated by the poetic exposition of Lucretius. The role enacted on the bucolic proscenium by the figure of Gallus *amator* incarnates a species of pathological desire that was anathema to a school of thought whose basic taxonomy of desires downgraded erotic passion as insatiable and productive of pain, rather than of true pleasure (*vera voluptas*). It is important, however, to discriminate between Gallan fantasies of erotic bliss in Arcadia (which involve a *misperception* of the nature of true pleasure) from the healthy *voluptas* articulated in the Epicurean hierarchy of fulfilled desires. The latter schema firmly cuts across generic boundaries. In Gallus' simplistic externalizations, however, there exists "bucolic" love (cavorting with a Phyllis) and his own "elegiac" passion (a tumultuous relationship with an unfaithful Lycoris). But the generic bucolic/elegiac distinction does not map on to the erotic *voluptas/amor* opposition. Thus "bucolic" figures such as Damon and Corydon exemplify retrograde forms of erotic obsession and are subjected to the same "critique of elegiac *amor*" that we have been tracing in this chapter.

If *Ecl.* 10 is, at bottom, an exposée of the dangers of *insanus amor*, it is legitimate to ask whether the dedicatee of the poem would have been likely to take offense at this underlying idea. The answer is negative: Vergil's tribute to Gallus is in no way compromised by the indirect critique of the latter's unhealthy behavior. On the contrary, that radical critique, as we have seen, is first launched in a highly transparent fashion by the regnant deities presiding over bucolic, Apollo and Pan. It is then advanced—not without irony—by the internal speaker himself, the Gallus persona, who, in the course of his monologue, exposes the pathological nature of his own erotic infatuation. The fact that Vergil felt free to elaborate an oblique criticism of elegiac *amor* is itself a proof of the close relationship between the two poets, since "frank speech" was regarded among the members of Vergil's circle of

---

[28] Cp. the language of the Lucretian passage quoted above, p. 153, in which the issue of the outer limits of the growth of true pleasure is raised.

[29] I have scrupulously avoided the shallow exercise—in vogue for centuries since an typically unfalsifiable assertion of Servius—of trying to guess which lines of Gallan poetry may have been reproduced in Vergil's poem.

friends as a virtue to be cultivated.[30] Vergil in fact goes out of his way in the postlude to emphasize his mutual affection for Gallus and to redeem the concept of *amor* by redeploying it as a trope for the devotion to literature.

Where does the subject of vicissitude, which we broached in our discussion of the programmatic first eclogue, stand in relation to the portrayal of erotic adversity in this final eclogue? Vergil's philosophical outlook on this question may be readily extrapolated from the manner in which the interrogation of *amor* is conducted throughout the poem. Infelicity—erotic or otherwise—is only one coordinate in the rhythm of human affairs. Gallus himself confesses that he cannot control his rampant *amor* (the god Amor cannot be decoupled from the corresponding emotion), and thereby precludes the only avenue of felicity open to him. Implicit in the Vergilian philosophical subtext is the notion that true felicity (or in Epicurean/Lucretian parlance, *vera voluptas*) can only be attained through cognitive enlightenment regarding the nature of desire. An absolute *sine qua non* of a trouble-free desire, in this school of thought, is the mental act of imposing a limit (*peras*; *modus*; *finis*) on unruly passions. Thus when Pan poses the rhetorical question in the starkest terms, "ecquis erit modus?" ("will there ever be a limit [sc. to your passion])?" he reveals in a single stroke both the problem and its solution.

Vergil's treatment of untroubled sexual fulfillment versus dangerous, unfulfillable desire is, in the nature of the case, asymmetrical. Mad passion (the *amor* of Dido for Aeneas is a case in point) lends itself more readily to exhilarating poetic narrative than to easy-going sexual relations of the kind that obtains among, say, nymphs and satyrs. At the end of the day, the superior form of figurative *amor* that we have labeled *poeticus* (as trope for poetic pursuit) more closely approximates the passion for philosophy that motivated Lucretius to use the trope of *amor* in the exuberant proem to *DRN* 3 (3–6):

> te sequor, o Graiae gentis decus, inque tuis nunc
> ficta pedum pono pressis vestigia signis,
> non ita certandi cupidus quam *propter amorem*
> quod te imitari aveo.

> I follow you, O glory of the Greek race, and in the traces you have made I plant my unwavering footsteps—not from a desire to rival you but rather because I am eager to emulate you *out of love*.

[30] Cp. Horace on his friend, the candid critic, Quintilius Varus (*AP* 438–444). On "frank speech" as principled praxis among poets/friends in Epicurean circles in the Bay of Naples, see Sider (1995) p. 44 (with references cited); Freudenberg (1993) 88–92.

Vergil similarly employs the amatory trope, when, in the exuberant finale of the second Georgic, he prefaces his praise of the happy Epicurean sage ("felix qui potuit …") with an invocation to the Muses in which he speaks of this sublimated form of passion in ecstatic terms (2. 475–476):

> Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musae,
> quarum sacra fero *ingenti percussus amore*.
> accipiant …

> May I be received first above all by the sweet Muses, whose sacred emblems I bear, *pierced to the depths by a boundless love* …

CHAPTER NINE

POSTLUDE: *DULCIS PARTHENOPE*

> At that time, I, Vergil, was being nourished by sweet Parthenope, while flourishing in the pursuits born of quiet leisure; I who composed songs of shepherds and, in the boldness of youth, sang of you, Tityrus, under the canopy of a spacious beech.[1]
>
> *Georgics* 4. 563–556

> The Bucolics are not an Epicurean poem [...], but they derive from an Epicurean substratum that is ubiquitous.
>
> Alfonso Traina[2]

The focal point of the foregoing analysis of major themes in the Eclogues has been on the differential responses of the poets/herdsmen to calamitous personal experiences. Of these calamities the two most prominent as leitmotifs throughout the collection are (a) material dislocation in the form of land dispossession and (b) mental dislocation in the wake of rejection by a lover. The repercussions on the emotional tranquility of the internal singers in regard to land dispossession are the subject of Chapters 2 and 3 (on *Ecl.* 1 and 9), in which we sought to extrapolate the philosophical underpinnings of their varied modes of coping with acute misfortune; while the *aporia* of the distraught lover is the topic investigated in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 (on *Ecl.* 2,

---

1 "illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat/Parthenope, studiis florentem ignobilis oti,/ carmina qui lusi pastorum audaxque iuventa,/Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi."

These lines form part of a *sphragis* that has been transmitted as a pendant to the end of the Georgics. Though the issue of Vergilian authorship remains moot, the lines are most likely to have been an "editor's epigram" (on which see the recent cogent discussion by Kayachev (2011).

2 "Le *Bucoliche* non sono un poema epicureo, [...] ma nascono da un sostrato epicureo che affiora dovunque." Traina (1986) 168.

6, 8 and 10). In the two intervening chapters we have explored the augmentation of the discourse on *tyche* (favorable and adverse) to encompass the cosmic stage (Chapter 4: "Vicissitude writ large: the ontology of the Golden Age [*Ecl.* 4]"), and the polarized responses to the death of the founder of the bucolic genre on the part of a pair of gifted composers ("Coping with death: The Interplay of Lament and Consolation in *Ecl.* 5").

As this very brief synopsis shows, it has not been our goal to provide interpretations of the "interplay of ideas" in all of the ten poems in the collection. *Ecl.* 3, for example, which dramatizes the breakdown in harmonious relationships between members of a pastoral community and *Ecl.* 7, which describes a poetic *agon* between rival singers for a prize, do not receive treatment in our account, mainly because they do not foreground the predominant theme of calamitous loss. Despite the difference of thematic emphasis in these two Eclogues, however, a parallel examination of their ethical substrata would reveal that they are both concerned with the negative effects of *invidia* on the equanimity of the bucolic *personae* and are therefore by no means exempt from the Vergilian exploration of the cognitive roots of human infelicity.[3]

The main lines of our exploration of the "interplay of ideas" in the fabric of Vergil's *Eclogues* has been partly guided by the observation that the pervasive allusions to Lucretius' great poem engage substantive issues concerning human felicity and its discontents. The Lucretian tags and echoes of diction, we have argued, are not mere tokens of stylistic borrowings, but constitute "systematic allusions"[4] to the thought of the Epicurean school and provide an ethical frame of reference for describing the predicament of the poets/herdsmen who are, at bottom, representative of humanity at large. Since a central working assumption of this monograph has been that Lucretian "echoes" are fundamentally constructive, rather than polemical, in rhetorical intent, a few clarifications of the differences between Vergilian and Lucretian discursive modalities are in order in this brief postlude.[5]

Whereas the *DRN* is expressly aimed at promulgating the truths enshrined in Epicurean teaching for the benefit of an educated Latin readership, the *Eclogues* are not to be understood as "didactic" in the vulgar and

---

[3] The Thyrsis-persona of 7 loses the contest, in my view, not because of some presumed technical failure as a musician, *pace* Pöschl (1964), but mainly as a consequence of the invidious content of his song.

[4] The phrase is taken from Lipka, 66–68, where he treats the topic in insightful, albeit summary fashion.

[5] See Gillespie and Hardie, *CCL*, p. 4; Farrell (1991) 169–206.

narrowly restricted sense of that designation. There remains, however, an important point of intersection between poetic and philosophical discourse in antiquity—an intersection that may be characterized, *faute de mieux*, as "soft didacticism."[6] In my view, it is fundamentally anachronistic to erect a sharp dichotomy between poetry, on the one hand, and philosophy, on the other, in regard to the major thematic preoccupations of the Augustan poets. Vergil and Horace—to take the two greatest poets of the era—were both deeply concerned to describe, through the complex medium of *carmen*, the central problematic informing the human effort to achieve happiness. Unlike Lucretius, however, Vergil does not, as a matter of course, advocate solutions to the problems that he lays bare, nor does he openly propound strategies for removing the obstacles to attaining felicity.[7] As we have shown, however, in regard to the key issues of coping with misfortune and with the dangers of erotic *dementia*, he obliquely engages in an underlying critique of aspects of behavior that are doomed to be self-defeating and tend to exacerbate pain and suffering (the Corydon of *Ecl.* 2 and Gallus of *Ecl.* 10, for instance, are two figures that exemplify this order of pathological desire).[8]

It is a truism often repeated in the literature on ancient philosophy that the topics of liberation from the negative aspects of *tyche* and *eros* were much debated in the philosophical schools of the late Hellenistic era. Since émigré Greek philosophers, such as Philodemus and Siro, directed philosophical studies in the region of the Bay of Naples—Vergil's "dulcis Parthenope"—educated Romans of the last century of the Republic had readily available to them the opportunity to extend their intellectual horizons in Italy itself, thanks to the "wholesale diaspora of [Greek] philosophers."[9] It is worth recalling that, for the Romans of the latter days of the Republic, higher education chiefly entailed the study of Greek philosophy, whether on Italian soil or at the traditional seats of learning at Greek centers such as Athens and Rhodes. In the case of Vergil, there is ample evidence

[6] The "hard didacticism" of Lucretius is described, though not under this label, with admirable clarity by Gale (2001).

[7] On the other hand, Horace in his poems on the *carpe diem* theme, in particular, does engage, repeatedly and explicitly, in prescriptive discourse on the nature of *sapientia*—on which see Davis (1991) 145–188. There is new evidence for the articulation of a lyric *sapientia* in Horace's Lesbian models in the form of "The New Sappho," on which see the article by Greene (2009).

[8] See above, Chapters 6 and 8.

[9] The phrase is from Obbink (2007) 38. Cp. Dorandi (1997) 35–48.

of his eager pursuit of philosophical studies in the shadow of Parthenope during, or at least very close to, the phase of composition of the Eclogues. The most striking piece of documentation confirming his presence there as a member of a close-knit community of poets engaged in the study of Epicurean thought under the guidance of the Greek teachers Siro and Philodemus is a papyrus fragment from Herculaneum containing a dedication to him, along with Plotius, Quintilius Varus and others.[10] The retrospective *sphragis* that is a pendant to the Fourth Georgic (cited above as the epigraph of this Postlude) makes manifest the deep connection between poetic and philosophic engagement on Vergil's part:

> Illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat
> Parthenope, studiis florentem ignobilis oti,
> carmina qui lusi pastorum audaxque iuventa
> Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi.

> At that time, I, Vergil, was being nourished by sweet Parthenope, while flourishing in the pursuits born of quiet leisure; I who composed songs of shepherds and, in the boldness of youth, sang of you, Tityrus, under the canopy of a spacious beech[11]

As we have pointed out in the Prelude (Chapter 1 above), Vergil's engagement with problems in ethics is manifest throughout his entire œuvre, from the *Eclogues* to the *Aeneid*.[12] His ongoing "conversation" (as we may figuratively term it) with the main tenets and key conceptualizations of the Epicurean system of thought may be extrapolated, not only from the Bucolic dialogues and monologues, as we have seen, but also, in more overt form, from the "hard didacticism" of the *Georgics*, as well as from the epic narrative of the *Aeneid*.

In regard to the Georgics, the conversation regarding the grounds for genuine felicity takes place, both obliquely and directly, against the backdrop of the cycle of the four seasons.[13] Vergil vividly delineates the changing scene affecting the farmers' external existence both in relation to the *annus* (the regular seasonal cycle) and to the larger overarching *magnus annus*

---

[10] See above, Ch.1, p. 2, note 2. See also Auricchio (2004); Delattre (2004) 245.

[11] As has been pointed out by more than one scholar of the Eclogues, many features of the landscape of Vergil's fictional "Arcadia" are, in the main, far more typical of the Neapolitan region than of the environs of Mantua and Cremona. See, e.g. Frank (1922) 113–115.

[12] Above, Chapter 2, pp. 5–7. Epicurean views regarding philosophical ideas in poetry are ably discussedby Asmiss (1995) 31.

[13] Klepl (1967) is a fundamental comparative study of the language and motifs that Vergil shares with Lucretian didactic in the Georgics.

(the fourfold cycle of the *saecula* or metallically labeled Ages). From both perspectives, local and macrocosmic, the regular, seasonal vicissitudes in the natural order determine the degree of *labor*, no less than of *otium*, that is to be experienced by human subjects. The role of the gods in the motif environment of the *Georgics* is not to engender the revolving phases of the *annus*, so much as enable them to come into their own and "have their day." In the celestial register of vicissitude, good fortune is represented chiefly by beneficent actions on the part of the gods, Ceres and Bacchus;[14] while Jupiter embodies both benevolent and malevolent accessory roles: in the Spring, he performs the benign script of the fertility sky-god who impregnates the earth with showers, while in the late autumn he is cast as the formidable, even malign, agent implementing violent storms.[15] The *praeceptor* of the Georgics links his discourse on the rotating external circumstances challenging human felicity to the cadre of the *magnus annus* that he earlier adumbrated in *Ecl.* 4. In his account of "vicissitude writ large" (the subject of Ch.4 above) he makes it clear that the sequence of *saecula* are not hermetically delimited, but rather overlap in such a way that traces (*vestigia*) of a passing age persist into the next. In conformity with this vision, early Italy in the Georgics retains vestiges of the age of Cronos ("Saturnia regna") that correspond to the local manifestation of a recurrent spring. This way of conceiving the cycles allows for a certain degree of simultaneity that cuts across the notion of strict linear succession, see above, p. 74.

What are the ethical repercussions of these predictable cycles, whether local or cosmic, on the pursuit of happiness on the part of farmers/humans? Confronted with metereological pendulum swings, the farmer, whose condition is synecdochic of mankind's, wisely makes behavioral and emotional adjustments in his ongoing struggle to eke out sustenance from the fields. Thus the farmer will fully enjoy the blessings of *otium* in the appropriate season and, in turn, weather the downturns in fortune by applying the requisite extent of *negotium* (*labor*) under harsh circumstances. In short, far from engaging in the fantasy of a stable condition (the "flattening out of vicissitude" as we have described in in connection with the outlook of the Meliboeus figure in *Ecl.* 1), the wise farmer is able to maintain his commitment

---

14 At *DRN* 5.1–54 Lucretius compares the benefits conferred on humanity by the deities Ceres and Liber, in particular, with those conferred by Epicurus (with the philosopher trumping the traditional pantheon). For the intertextual relations between this passage and the *Georgics*, see especially Gale (2000) 26–30.

15 Benign Jupiter: 2.325–345; malign Jupiter: 1.328–334. The oscillation in divine roles assigned to the sky-god primarily reflects the regular vicissitude intrinsic to the natural order.

to a productive life, secure in the knowledge that, as Vergil's bosom friend Horace phrases it, "mutat terra vices" ("the earth rehearses its changes").[16] Above all, Vergil explicitly enunciates the view that true felicity is founded on sound cognitive premises. We can best discern the ideational consistency between *Bucolics* and *Georgics* on this score by briefly re-examining the famous passage in the latter poem on the subject of the human potential for achieving *eudaimonia*.

Towards the end of the second book of the Georgics, Vergil launches into a provocative reflection on the internal preconditions for human felicity (II. 490–494):[17]

> *felix* qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas
> atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum
> subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis auari;
> fortunatus et ille, deos qui novit agrestes,
> Panaque Silvanumque *senem* Nymphasque sorores.
>
> *Happy* is the person who succeeds in gaining knowledge of the causes of things, and has trampled beneath his feet all forms of fear and pitiless fate and the bedlam of greedy Acheron. Happy also is the person who comes to know the gods of the countryside: Pan, the *aged* Sylvanus and the sister Nymphs.

Despite the *communis opinio* that seeks to identify the *felix* with a particular historical figure (the two favorite candidates are Epicurus and Lucretius), I subscribe to the more nuanced view that Vergil is here articulating a *general proposition* regarding a class rather than an individual. By this reading, the poet is affirming that any person who has achieved insight into the nature of things (and this category clearly includes Epicurus and his disciples, such as Lucretius) is declared to be capable of experiencing true felicity.[18] There is both grammatical and, equally important, rhetorical validation of this generic interpretation of the "beatitude." From a grammatical point of view, whether we construe the perfect *potuit* as a present perfect ("has been able") or an aorist ("was able"), the tense is to be construed as having a "gnomic" connotation. A "gnomic perfect" accords best with the generalizing rhetoric of the passage as a whole, since it would be somewhat incongruous for the poet to assert: "Happy was a particular historical individual [Epicurus or Lucretius, say] who had knowledge of the nature of the universe; also

---

[16] Horace *C.* 4.4.3.

[17] This complements and expands our previous discussions of this passage: above, Ch.1, pp. 6–7; Ch.4, pp. 76–77; Ch.8, pp. 147–148.

[18] The inclusiveness in the poet's definition of the class of the blessed is consonant with the theory and practice of the Epicurean community, on which see e.g Dewitt (1954) 101–105.

happy is a particular farmer [designated by *ille*] who has knowledge of the gods of the countryside." The parallel constatations of the knowledge preconditions of felicity ("felix qui ...;" "fortunatus et ille ...") point to a twin universal formulation that posits two classes of mankind: those who achieve felicity by their formal philosophical acquisition of knowledge, and those who come to intuitive knowledge through their exposure to the gods of the countryside. It is important to note that the latter case—the happy farmer who is enlightened by virtue of a profound understanding of the nature of the rustic divinities—is by no means represented by Vergil as a given. On the contrary, in a passage immediately antecedent to the one quoted above he implies that the felicity of farmers is not automatic, but rather *contingent* upon their cognitive enhancement (2.458–459):

> O fortunatos nimium, *sua si bona norint*,
> agricolas!
>
> O how more than blessed will farmers be[19] *if they come to know their good fortune*!

The protasis with its future perfect tense (*norint*) induced Page to annex the following paraphrase of these lines: "how blessed are they [farmers], and how will their bliss be enhanced by the full consciousness of it."[20] The ethical undercurrent in the exclamation, as we have observed above, draws the reader's attention to the ideas that Vergil elaborates in the Georgics, no less than in his Bucolic discourse, concerning the intellectual basis of genuine felicity.

The discursive subtext that Vergil initiates in the Eclogues regarding the proper limits to *amor* (*modus*) is also continued in the culminating mythical episode of the Georgics: the portrait of Orpheus as *amator* in the intercalated tale of the legendary poet's excessive mourning for his lost Eurydice. In his critique of a certain disturbed type of amatory experience (see above Chapters 6 and 8), Vergil had stressed the necessity of imposing a limit upon erotic desire. Orpheus is the supreme example of the lover who is incapable of relinquishing his excessive grief over the loss of his *amata*. Despite the sympathetic tone of his portrayal of Orpheus' plight, then, there lurks a discernibly critical stance towards the musician's doomed attempts to reverse Eurydice's death.[21] In two of his *Carmina* that contain

---

19 Kennedy's translation of the lines, as cited by Page ad loc.

20 Page loc. cit.

21 Cp. His equally sympathetic portrayal of Dido, which nonetheless contains a critique of obsessive passion leading inexorably to self-destruction.

allusions to the Vergilian account of Orpheus' immoderate grief for his beloved's demise (one of which is actually addressed to Vergil), Horace alludes to the necessity of putting a timely end to grief, as appropriate, and avoiding the pitfall of an "elegiac" stance on the subject of the aggrieved *amator*/poet.[22] Both poets were demonstrably "in conversation"—through the vehicle of poetry—regarding the difficult challenge of how best to manage one's emotions (particularly the emotional perturbation caused by extreme passion) in such a way as to achieve inner tranquility.[23]

In regard to the ethical discourse of the *Aeneid*, the representation of the infelicity that is the product of *insanus amor* in the central episode of Dido and Aeneas is no less a critique of *dementia* for being sympathetic to the emotional perturbation of the Carthaginian queen.[24] By referring to Vergil's (and Horace's) ethical engagements with Epicurean thought and praxis as "conversations," then, I aim to recapitulate my point of view that the poet was by no means beholden to the dogma and precepts of the Garden, but rather that, like his close friend, Horace, who famously declared his own eclecticism,[25] he saw in the Epicurean teaching on the *summum bonum* a useful and provocative frame of reference for his "interplay of ideas."

The eudaimonist ethical conversation we have traced in the Eclogues is an important, but by means unique interpretive "code" to be extrapolated from the ideational substructure of the collection. Our analysis has touched in passing on various other codes operating in the poems, such as the generic code (involving Elegiac versus Bucolic modes), the "locus of performance" code (the manipulation of the *umbra* motif in prologic and epilogic contexts) and the "age of singer" code (built on the *puer/senex* dichotomy). There is need for future scholarship on Vergilian poetics oriented towards developing a comprehensive, systematic study of these multiple codes and of their imbrication in the thematic texture of the Eclogues.

---

22 Horace *C.* 2.9 (addressed to Valgius Rufus), on which see Davis (1991) 50–60.

23 Horace *C.* 1. 24.19–20: "durum, sed levius fit patientia/quicquid corrigere est nefas" ("It is tough, but whatever it is unalterable by divine law, grows lighter to bear through patient restraint").

24 Vergil's epic narrator evinces "sympathy" for Aeneas no less than Dido, though the underlying critique of *amor* applies to both participants. It is worth noting that a similarly negative critique of *eros* is shared by both Epicureans and Stoics.

25 Horace: *Epist.* 1.1.14: "nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri" ("I am not bound by an oath of allegiance to any one master").

WORKS CITED

NB. The following list of works is not intended to be a comprehensive bibliography of the voluminous secondary literature on Vergil's *Eclogues*. It comprises only those works cited in the main text and footnotes.

Alföldi, A. (1930). "Der neue Weltherrscher der vierten Ekloge Vergils." *Hermes* 65: 369–385.

Alfonsi, L. (1959). "L'epicureismo nella storia spirituale di Vergilio." In *Epicurea in memoriam Hectoris Bignone* (*Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto di filologia classica: 2*): 167–178. Genova.

———. (1961). "Dalla seconda alla decima ecloga." *Aevum* 35 3: 192–198.

Anderson, G. (1993). "The Origins of Daphnis: Vergil's Eclogues and the Ancient Near East." *PVS* 21: 65–79.

Anderson, R.D., P.J. Parsons, and R.G.M. Nisbet. (1979). "Elegiacs by Gallus from Qasr Ibrim." *JRS* 69: 125–155.

Anderson, W.S. (1963). "Multiple Change in the Metamorphoses." *TAPA* 94: 1–27.

Annas, J. (1989). "Epicurean Emotions." *GRBS* 30.2: 45–164.

Arrighetti, G. (1973), Ed. *Epicuro: Opere*. 2nd ed. Turin.

Armstrong, D. (1995). "The Impossibility of Metathesis: Philodemus and Lucretius on Form and Content in Poetry." In Obbink (1995): 210–232.

Armstrong, D.J.F.; P. Johnston; M. Skinner, Edd. (2004). *Vergil, Philodemus and the Augustans*. Austin.

Asmis, E. (1990). "Philodemus' Epicureanism." *ANRW* II. 36.4: 2369–2406.

———. (1995). "Epicurean Poetics." In Obbink (1995): 15–34.

———. (2009). "Epicurean Empiricism." In *CCE*: 84–104.

Auricchio, F. (2004). "Philosophy's Harbor." In Armstrong et al.: 37–42.

Bailey, C. (1922). *Lucreti De Rerum Natura Libri Sex*. 2nd ed. Oxford.

Berg, W. (1974). *Early Vergil*. London.

Brenk, F. (1981). "War and the Shepherd: the Tomb of Bianor in Vergil's Ninth Eclogue." *AJP* 102.4: 427–430.

Brown, R.D. (1987). *Lucretius on Love and Sex: A commentary on De Rerum Natura IV, 1030–1287*. Leiden.

Bundy, E. (1986). *Studia Pindarica*. Berkeley/Los Angeles.

Bury, R.G., Ed. (1932). *The Symposium of Plato*. Cambridge.

Cairns, F. (1999). "Vergil, Eclogues 1.1–2: A Literary Programme?" *HSCP* 99: 289–293.

Camps, W.A. (1967). *Propertius: Elegies Book I*. Cambridge.

Carcopino, J. (1930). *Virgile et le mystère de la IVe eclogue*. Paris.

Castelli, G. (1966). "Echi lucreziani nelle Ecloghe virgilianae." *RSC* 14: 313–342.

———. (1967). "Echi lucreziani nelle Ecloghe virgilianae." *RSC* 15: 14–39; 176–216.

Castner, C. (1988). *Prosopography of Roman Epicureans from the Second Century BC to the Second Century AD*. Frankfurt am Main.

Chambert, R. (2004). "Vergil's Epicureanism in His Early Poems." In Armstrong et al., 43–60.
Cipolla, G. (1984). "Dafni." In *Enc. Virg*. Vol. I: 972–973.
Clausen, W. (1964). "Callimachus and Latin Poetry." *GRBS* 5: 181–196.
———., Ed. (1994). *Virgil: Eclogues*. Oxford.
Clay, D. (1983). *Lucretius and Epicurus*. Ithaca/London.
———. (1998). *Paradosis and Survival*. Ann Arbor.
———. (2000). *Platonic Questions: dialogues with the silent philosopher*. Pennsylvania.
———. (2004). "Vergil's Farewell to Education (Catalepton 5)". In Armstrong et al: 25–36.
———. (2009). "The Athenian Garden." In *CCE*: 9–28.
Coleman, R., Ed. (1977). *Vergil: Eclogues*. Cambridge.
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. (1993) [1800]. *Biographia Literaria Vol.2*, edd. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate. Princeton.
Conte, G.B. (1986). *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and other Latin poets*. Ithaca/London.
Courtney, E. (1990). "Vergil's Sixth Eclogue." *QUCC* 34.1: 99–112.
———. (1993). *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*. Oxford.
Damon, Phillip (1961). "Modes of Analogy in Ancient and Medieval Verse." *University of California Publications in Classical Philology* 15.6: 261–334.
Davis, G. (1967). "*Ad sidera notus*: the rhetoric of Lament and Consolation in Fortunatus' *De Gelesuintha*." *Agon* 1.1: 118–134.
———. (1968). *Studies in the Narrative Economy of Ovid's Metamorphoses*. Diss. University of California at Berkeley.
———. (1983). *The Death of Procris: Amor and the Hunt in Ovid's Metamorphoses*. Rome.
———. (1991). *Polyhymnia: The Rhetoric of Horatian Lyric Discourse*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford.
———. (1994). "Cupid at the Ivory Gates: Ausonius as a reader of Vergil." *Colby Quarterly* 30.3: 162–170.
———. (2004). "Consolation in the Bucolic Mode: The Epicurean Cadence of Vergil's First Eclogue." In Armstrong et al.: 63–74.
———. (2007). "Wine and the Symposium." In *The Cambridge Companion to Horace*. ed. Stephen Harrison. Cambridge: 207–220.
Delattre, D. (2004). "Vergil and Music, in Diogenes of Babylon and Philodemus." In Armstrong et al.: 245–263.
———. (2007). *Philodème de Gadara: Sur la musique Livre IV*. Paris.
Dewitt, Norman. (1954). *Epicurus and his Philosophy*. Minneapolis.
Dodds, E.R. (1973). *The ancient concept of progress and other essays on Greek literature and belief*. Oxford.
Dorandi, Tiziano (1997). "Lucrèce et les Épicuriens de Campanie." In *Lucretius and his Intellectual Background*, edd. K.A. Algra, M.H. Koenen, P.H. Schrijvers. Amsterdam/Oxford/New York/Tokyo: 35–48.
Du Quesnay, I.M. (1976). "Vergil's Fourth Eclogue." *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 1: 25–100.
———. (1979). "From Polyphemus to Corydon: Vergil, Eclogue 2 and the Idylls of The-

ocritus." In *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature*. ed. D. Woodman. Cambridge: 35–69.
———. (1979). "Virgil's fifth Eclogue. The song of Mopsus and the new Daphnis." *PVS* 16: 18–41.
———. (1981). "Vergil's First Eclogue." *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 3: 29–182.
Erler, M. and M. Schofield. (1999). "Epicurean Ethics." In *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, edd. J.B.K. Algra, J. Mansfeld and M. Schofield. Cambridge: 642–674.
Fantuzzi, M and Papanghelis, T. Edd. (2006). *Brill's Companion to Greek and Latin Pastoral*. Leiden/Boston.
Farrell, J. (1991). *Vergil's Georgics and the traditions of ancient epic*. New York/Oxford.
Faraone, C. (2006). "Magic, Medicine and Eros in the Prologue to Theocritus' Eleventh *Idyll*." In *BCGLP*: 75–90.
Farrell, J. (2005). "Intention and Intertext." *Phoenix* LIX.1: 98–111.
Fedeli, P. (1972). "Sulla prima bucolica di Virgilio." *Giornale italiano di filologia* n.s. 3: 273–300.
Fowler, D. (2002). *Lucretius on Atomic Motion: A Commentary on De rerum natura 2. 1–332*. Oxford/New York.
Frank, T. (1916). "Magnum Jovis Incrementum." *CP* 11: 334.
———. (1922). *Vergil: A Biography*. New York.
Fränkel, H. (1975). "Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy: a history of Greek epic, lyric and prose to the middle of the fifth century." New York.
Ferguson, J. (1990). "Epicureanism under the Roman Empire." *ANRW* II.36.4: 2257–2327.
Freudenberg, K. (1993). *The Walking Muse: Horace on the Theory of Satire*. Princeton.
Gale, Monica. (2000). *Virgil on the nature of things: the Georgics, Lucretius and the didactic tradition*. Cambridge.
———. (2001). *Lucretius and the Didactic Epic*. London.
Gatz, B. (1967). *Weltalter: goldene Zeit und sinnverwandte Vorstellungen*. Hildesheim.
Geymonat, M. (2008). *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*. Rome.
Gigante, M. (1981). "Lettura della prima bucolica." In *Lecturae Vergilianae 1: Le bucoliche*. Naples: 19–104.
———. (1983). *Ricerche filodemee*. Naples.
———. (1987). *La bibliothèque de Philodème et l'épicurisme romain*. Paris.
———. (1995). *Philodemus in Italy: the books from Herculaneum*. Ann Arbor.
———. (2004). "Vergil in the Shadow of Vesuvius." In Armstrong et al.: 85–99.
Gillespie S. and Hardie, P. Edd. *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius*. Cambridge.
Gow, A.S.F. (1952). *Theocritus*. 2 vols. Cambridge.
Gow, A.S.F. and Page, D. Edd. (1965). *The Greek anthology: Hellenistic epigrams*. Cambridge.
Greene, Ellen. (2009). "Sappho 58: Philosophical Reflections on Death and Aging." In E. Greene and M. Skinner, edd.: *The New Sappho on Old Age: Textual and Philosophical Issues*. (2009): 147–161.
Guerrini, R. (1973). "Vos Coryli testes: struttura e canto nella V Ecloga di Virgilio." *RAL* 28: 683–694.
Gutzwiller, K. (2006). "The Herdsman in Greek Thought." In *BCGLP*: 1–23.

———. (2007). *A Guide to Hellenistic Literature*. Maiden, MA.
Halperin, D. (1983). *Before Pastoral: Theocritus and the Ancient Tradition of Bucolic Poetry*. New Haven/London.
Hardie, P. (2006). "Cultural and Historical Narratives in Vergil's Eclogues and Lucretius." In *BCGLP*: 275–300.
Harrison, S. (2007). *Generic Enrichment in Vergil and Horace*. Oxford.
Henry, W.B., Ed. (2009). *Philodemus on Death*. Atlanta.
Hopkinson, N. (1988). *A Hellenistic Anthology*. Cambridge/New York.
Housman, A.E. (1961). *The Name and Nature of Poetry*. Cambridge.
Hubbard, T.K. (1995/1996). "Intertextual hermeneutics in Vergil's Fourth and Fifth Eclogues." *CJ* 91.1: 11–23.
———. (1998). *The Pipes of Pan: Intertextuality and Literary Filiation in the Pastoral Tradition from Theocritus to Milton*. Ann Arbor.
———. (2008). "Allusive Artistry and Vergil's Revisionary Program: Eclogues 1–3." In *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies: Vergil's Eclogues*, ed. K. Volk. Oxford: 79–109.
Hunter, R. (1999). *Theocritus: A Selection*. Cambridge.
———. (2006). "Vergil's Ecl.1 and the Origins of Pastoral." In *BCGLP*: 263–273.
Indelli, G. (2004). "The Vocabulary of Anger in Philodemus' *De Ira* and Vergil's *Aeneid*." In Armstrong et al.:103–110.
Inwood, B., L.P. Gerson, and D.S. Hutchinson. Edd. (1994). *The Epicurus Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia*. Indianapolis.
Jacobson, H. (1982). "A Philosophical *topos* at Virgil, *Eclogues* 6. 37–39." *LCM* 7. 3: 42.
Jakobson, R. (1956). "The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles." In *Fundamentals of Language*, edd. R. Jakobson and M. Halle. 's Gravenhage: 76–82.
Janko, R. (2000). *Philodemus: On Poems*. Oxford.
Jeanmaire, H. (1930). *Le messianisme de Virgile*. Paris.
Jones, F. (2011). *Virgil's Garden: The Nature of Bucolic Space*. London.
Kassel, R. (1958). *Untersuchungen zur Griechischen und Römischen Konsolationsliteratur*. Munich.
Kayachev, B. (2011). "*Ille ego qui quondam*: Genre, Date and Authorship." In *Vergilius*: 57: 75–82.
Klepl, H. (1967). *Lukrez und Virgil in ihren Lehrgedichten: Vergleichende Interpretationen*. Darmstadt.
Konstan, D. (2009). "Epicurus on the gods." In Jeffry Fish and Kirk Sanders, edd. *Epicurus and the Epicurean Tradition*. Cambridge: 53–71.
Krisak, L.T. (2010). *Virgil's Eclogues*. Pennsylvania.
Kristeva, J. (1984). *Revolution in Poetic Language*. New York.
Lattimore, R. (1962). *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs*. Urbana, Illinois.
Leach, Edmund. (1961). "Two Essays concerning the Symbolic Representation of Time." In *Rethinking Anthropology*: 124–136. London.
Leach, Eleanor. (1968). "The Unity of Eclogue 6." *Latomus* 27: 13–32.
Lee, G. (1977). "A reading of Virgil's Fifth Eclogue." *PCPhS* 23: 62–70.
Lee, G. (1984). Trans. *Virgil: The Eclogues*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex.
Lightfoot, J.L.E. (1999). *Parthenius of Nicaea: the poetical fragments and the Erotika Pathemata*. Oxford
Lipka, M. (2001). *Language in Vergil's Eclogues*. Berlin.
———. (2002). "Notes on *fagus* in Vergil's Eclogues." *Philologus* 146: 133–138.

Long, A.A. and Sedley, D. (1987). *The Hellenistic Philosophers*. Cambridge.
Lyne, R.O.A.M. (1978). "The Neoteric Poets." *CQ* n.s. 28.1: 167–187.
Martini, L. (1986). "Influssi Lucreziani nelle Bucoliche di Virgilio." *Civilta classica e cristiana* 7: 297–331.
Merrill, W.A. (1918). "Parallels and Coincidences in Lucretius and Vergil." *University of California Publications in Classical Philology* 3.3: 135–247.
Mette, A.J. (1973). "Vergil, Bucol.4: Ein Beispiel 'generischer' Interpretation." *RhM* 116: 71–78.
Mitsis, P. (1988). *Epicurus' Ethical Theory: The Pleasures of Invulnerability*. Ithaca.
Mizera, S.M. (1982). "Lucretian Elements in Menalcas' song, Eclogue 5." *Hermes* 110: 367–371.
Murray, A.T. (1924). *Homer: The Iliad*. Cambridge, Mass.
Nauta, R.R. "Panegyric in Vergil's Bucolics." In *BCGLP*: 301–332.
Nisbet, R.G.M. (2008). "Virgil's Fourth Eclogue: Easterners and Westerners." In *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies*: *Vergil's Eclogues*, ed. K. Volk. Oxford: 155–188.
Norden, E. (1913). *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Reder*. Leipzig/Berlin.
———. (1924). *Die Geburt des Kindes: Geschichte einer religiösen idée*. Leipzig.
Nussbaum, M. (1989). "Beyond Obsession and Disgust: Lucretius' Genealogy of Love." *Apeiron* XXII.1: 1–59.
———. (1994). *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*. Princeton.
Obbink, D. (1989). "The Atheism of Epicurus." *GRBS* 30: 187–223.
———., Ed. (1995). *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus and Horace*. New York/Oxford.
———. (1996). *Philodemus on Piety, Part I*. Oxford.
———. (2007). "Lucretius and the Herculaneum Library." In *CCL*: 33–40.
O'Keefe, T. (2005). *Epicurus on Freedom*. Cambridge.
Otis, B. (1967). "Housman and Horace." *Pacific Coast Philology* II: 5–23.
———. (1964). *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry*. Oxford.
Paratore, E. (1960). *L'epicureismo e la sua diffusione nel mondo latino*. Rome.
———. (1964). "Struttura, ideologia e poesia nell'Ecloga VI di Virgilio." In *Hommages à J. Bayet*: 509–537. Paris.
Perkell, C. (1996). "The 'Dying Gallus' and the Design of Eclogue 10." *CP* 91.2.: 128—140.
———. (2002). "The Golden Age and its Contradictions in the Poetry of Virgil." *Vergilius* 48: 3–39.
———. (2008). "On Eclogue 1.79–83." In *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies: Vergil's Eclogues*, ed. K. Volk. Oxford: 110–124.
Pöschl, V. (1964). *Die Hirtendichtung Virgils*. Heidelberg.
Postgate, J.P. (1926). *Select Elegies of Propertius*. London.
Prince, M. (2002). *Magic, Love and the Limits of Power: the figure of Medea in Latin Love Elegy*, Diss. Duke Universitty.
Propp, V. (1968). *Morphology of the Folktale*. 2nd ed. Bloomington, Indiana.
Putnam, M.J. (1970). *Virgil's Pastoral Art: Studies in the Eclogues*. Princeton.
———. (2000). *Horace's Carmen Saeculare: ritual magic and the poet's art*. New Haven.

Rundin, J. (2003). "The Epicurean Morality of Vergil's Bucolics." *CW* 96: 159–176.
Schmidt, E.A. (1987). *Bukolische Leidenschaft oder über antike Hirtenpoesie*. Frankfurt.
Sedley, D. (1989). "The Proems of Empedocles and Epicurus." *GRBS* 30.2: 269–296.
———. (1998). *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom*. Cambridge.
———., Ed. (2003). *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*. Cambridge.
———. (2007). *Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity*. Berkeley.
———. (2009). "Epicureanism in the Roman Republic." In *CCE*:29–45.
Sens, A. 2006. "Epigram at the Margins of Pastoral." In *BCGLP*: 147–165.
Sider, D. (1995). "The Epicurean Philosopher as Poet." In Obbink (1995): 42–57.
———. (1997). *The Epigrams of Philodemus*. New York.
———. (2005). *The Library at the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum*. Los Angeles.
Smith, M.F. (1979). "Eight New Fragments of Diogenes of Oeneonda." *Anatolian Studies* 29: 69–89.
Smith, M., and Rouse, W. (1982). *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura*. Cambridge, Mass.
Snell, B. (1960). *The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought*. Trans. T. Rosenmeyer. New York.
Stevens, Wallace (1942). *The Necessary Angel: essays on Reality and the Imagination*. New York.
Syndikus, H.P. (2001). *Die Lyrik des Horaz*: *Eine Interpretation der Oden*. 3rd ed., 2 vols. Darmstadt.
Taplin, O. (1980). "The Shield of Achilles within the Iliad." *Greece and Rome* n.s. 27.1: 1–21.
Tarn, W.W. (1932). "Alexander Helios and the Golden Age." *JRS* 22. Part. 2: 135–160.
Taylor (1931). *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*. Middletown, Conn.
Tracy, S. (1982). "Sepulcrum Bianoris: Virgil Eclogues 9. 59–61." *CP* 77.4: 328–330.
Traina, A. (1986) [1965]. "'Si numquam fallit imago': Riflessioni sulle *Bucoliche* e l'epicureismo." In *Poeti latini* (*e neolatini*)*: Note e saggi filologici*. 2nd ed. Bologna: 163–174.
Tsouna, V. (2007). *The Ethics of Philodemus*. Oxford.
Tugwell, S. (1963). "Virgil, Eclogue 9, 59–60." *CR* 13.2: 132–133.
Van Sickle, J. (1981). "Commentaria in Maronem Commenticia: A Case History of Bucolics misread." *Arethusa* 14.1: 17–34.
———. (2000). "Virgil vs. Cicero, Lucretius, Theocritus, Plato and Homer." *Vergilius* 46: 21–58.
———. (2004). *The Design of Virgil's Bucolics*. 2nd ed. London.
———. (2004). "Virgil Bucolics 1-1-2 and Interpretative Tradition: A Latin (Roman) program for a Greek genre". *CP* 99: 336–353.
Volk, K.E. (2008). "Introduction: Scholarly Approaches to the Eclogues since the 1970's." In: *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies: Vergil's Eclogues.*: 1–15, ed. K. Volk. Oxford.
Warren, J. (2004). *Facing Death: Epicurus and his Critics*. Oxford.
———. (2007). "Lucretius and Greek Philosophy". In *CCL*: 19–32.
———., Ed. (2009a). *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism*. Cambridge.
———. (2009). "Removing Fear." In *CCE*: 234–248.
Weinstock, S. (1971). *Divus Julius*. Oxford.

West, M. (1978). *Hesiod: Works and Days*. Oxford.
Whitman, C. (1958). *Homer and the Heroic Tradition*. New York.
Wigodsky, M. (1974). "A Pattern of Argument in Lucretius." *Pacific Coast Philology*, IX, 1974, 73–78.
———. (2004). "Emotions and Immortality in Philodemus' *On the Gods: 3* and the *Aeneid*." In Armstrong et al.: 211–228.
Wilson, E. (1954). *Eight Essays*. New York.
Woodman, A.J. (1991). "Virgil, Eclogue 6. 39–40 and Lucretius." *LCM* 16.6. 92.
———. (1997). "The position of Gallus in Eclogue 6." *CQ* n.s.47.2.: 593–597.
Woolf, R. (2009). "Pleasure and Desire." In *CCE*: 158–178.
Wordsworth, William and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. (1940) [1805]. "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads." In: *The Lyrical Ballads, 1798–1805*; ed. G. Sampson. London.

INDEX

age, see *puer*; *senex*
Alphesiboeus, 13, 93, 111, 113, 115–118
amor, 6, 13, 88n23, 99, 104, 105, 105n12, 106, 109, 112, 116, 116n30, 117, 119, 121, 122, 123, 127, 128, 129, 134–136, 139–141, 143, 144, 147, 149, 150, 152, 153, 154, 156, 157, 158–160, 169, 170, 170n24
  as trope for poetic pursuit (*poeticus*), 125, 126, 141, 158, 160
antrum, 57, 82
Apollo, 66, 84, 85, 89, 93, 122–125, 130, 135, 136, 138–140, 144, 146, 147, 149, 154, 156, 159
Arcades, 150
Arethusa, 141, 142, 142n3, 143
ataraxia, 5, 38, 39, 39n29, 105, 148

beeches, 42, 43, 100
Bianor, 56–58, 58n25, 59, 60, 60n30

Cicero, 2n2, 19n5, 41, 53, 53n19, 60n31, 79, 89n27, 95, 95n40, 129n15
consolation, 12, 13, 34, 35, 46, 53, 54, 60, 80, 84, 86, 88, 92, 95n40, 96, 151, 157, 164
  poetry as, 13, 42, 45, 51, 60
Corydon, 13, 22n10, 94, 99, 100, 100n3, 101, 101n4, 103, 104, 104n11, 105, 105n14, 106–113, 116, 117, 119, 135, 137n31, 146n10, 149, 150, 151n17, 155, 156, 159, 165

Damoetas, 93, 124, 125
Damon, 8, 13, 111–118, 145, 159
Daphnis, 13, 37, 38, 45, 51, 52, 79, 80, 80n6, 81, 83, 83n12, 84, 84n15, 85, 86, 86n20, 86n21, 87–91, 91n32, 92–94, 94n36, 96, 107, 108, 114, 142, 145–147
  amatus of Alphesiboeus, 114, 117–119

dementia, see *amor*
desire, see *amor*

elegy, 127, 137, 138, 141, 144, 147, 151, 154
Epicurus, x, 5, 6n11, 8, 8n18, 17, 28, 35, 36n25, 37, 39, 39n31, 52, 53, 76, 79, 79n2, 89n27, 91, 92, 95, 96, 96n42, 99, 104, 108, 108n19, 148, 153, 167n14, 168
eudaimonia, see felicity

felicity, 1, 6, 6n11, 8, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24–26, 29–31, 38n28, 51, 52, 54, 76, 76n26, 77, 79, 91n32, 95, 121, 160, 164–169
Gallus, 12, 13, 105, 127, 128, 136, 136n30, 137, 137n32, 138–144, 144n6, 145, 146n10, 147, 149–151, 151n17, 152, 153, 153n21, 154, 154n21, 155–160, 165
generic disavowal, 49, 91, 121, 122, 139

Horace, 4n7, 10n24, 14, 14n34, 29, 38, 88n25, 128, 128n13, 160n30, 165, 165n7, 168n16, 170, 170n22, 170n23, 170n25
  as intimate friend of Vergil, 2n2, 4, 10, 168, 170

invidia, 21, 22, 164

lament, 13, 33, 45, 80, 82, 83, 83n13, 84, 88, 94, 95n40, 96, 154, 164
land, loss of, 13, 14, 29, 32, 33, 41, 41n3, 48, 61, 163
limit, See *modus*
Lucretius, vii, 5, 6n11, 8, 9, 14n34, 36, 76, 91, 92, 96n41, 99, 104, 105n12, 106–110, 110n22, 115n29, 121, 129, 129n16, 131–133, 133n24, 152, 153, 159, 160, 164, 165, 165n6, 167n14, 168
Lycidas, 41–58, 60, 61, 99, 131n19

magic, 43, 44, 57, 103n8, 113–116, 118, 119
Meliboeus, 12, 17–22, 22n9, 23, 23n12, 24–29, 29n17, 30, 30n19, 31–39, 41, 43, 51, 54, 61, 69, 94, 131n19, 133, 167
memory, 3, 28, 41, 49, 50, 52–56, 94n35
  of poems as consolation, 13, 42, 46, 48
Menalcas, 37, 43–46, 52–54, 56, 60, 61, 80–83, 83n12, 84, 87–91, 91n32, 92–95, 95n37, 96, 99, 124, 125, 131n19, 146, 147
misfortune, see vicissitude
modus, 32, 45, 80, 88, 96, 104, 105, 119, 148, 149, 149n13, 153, 158, 160, 169
Moeris, 41–44, 46–50, 52–56, 58, 58n26, 59–61, 99, 131n19
Mopsus, 37, 45, 52, 54, 79–86, 88–90, 94–96, 112, 131n19

Orpheus, 19, 8n25, 96, 113, 114, 169, 170

Pan, 76, 86n21, 90, 111, 138, 145–150, 156, 158–160, 168
Parthenope, vii, 163, 163n1, 165, 166
Philodemus, 2, 2n2, 6n10, 9, 10, 36, 95, 110n24, 111n25, 114, 114n28, 115n28, 165, 166
plain fare, 35
pleasure, see *voluptas*
Pollio, 65n6, 66, 125, 125n9, 128
Polyphemus, 49, 101–105, 105n14, 112, 117, 135
puer, 54, 60, 64, 65, 65n6, 66–68, 76, 130, 130n18, 131n19, 148, 170

recusatio, see generic disavowal

sacrifice, 20, 21, 26–28, 126n10
satiety, 19n4, 158, 158n27
senex, 29, 39, 54, 61, 130, 131, 131n19, 148, 170
shade, see *umbra*
Silenus, 8, 9, 13, 14, 48n11, 75, 75n23, 121, 123, 128–130, 130n18, 131, 132, 132n23, 133, 133n24, 134–136, 139, 140, 148

Thalea, 10, 14, 122, 123n5
Theocritus, 18, 18n3, 22, 47, 49, 50, 81, 85, 93, 101, 101n6, 103, 103n9, 108, 108n20, 126, 141, 142, 146, 147
Tityrus, 12, 17, 18, 18n3, 19–23, 23n10, 23n12, 24–29, 29n17, 30–38, 38n27, 39, 39n29, 39n31, 41, 44, 46, 47, 51, 54, 61, 70, 85, 92, 114, 123, 126, 131n19, 163, 166
Traina, Alfonso, 9n20, 15n35, 104, 105n12, 107, 107n18, 108n19, 163, 163n2
tyche, see vicissitude

umbra, 18, 19, 19n4, 36, 37, 43, 45, 57, 100, 101n4, 135, 148, 158, 158n27, 170

Varus, Quintilius, 2n2, 56, 61, 123, 128, 128n13, 140, 160n30, 166
Vergil, vii, 1, 2n2, 4–6, 6n11, 8, 10, 12, 18, 19n6, 37, 42, 48, 54, 57, 61, 63–65, 67–69, 71, 72, 72n19, 74, 74n21, 76, 88, 103–106, 108, 110, 111, 113, 115n29, 119, 121, 123, 124, 126, 127, 128n13, 129, 131, 133–136, 138, 139, 141, 143, 147, 149, 152n19, 153, 155, 157–161, 165, 166, 166n13, 168, 169
  Aeneid, 2n3, 5, 6, 6n10, 8, 10, 134, 166, 170
  Eclogues, vii, 1, 2, 2n3, 7, 7n13, 7n15, 8–12, 15, 18n2, 19, 19n5, 19n6, 21, 39n29, 42n4, 53, 56, 64n4, 69, 94, 96, 99, 104, 111, 112, 124, 126, 130, 131n19, 133, 137, 142, 150, 155–158, 163, 164, 166, 166n11, 169, 170
    Eclogues 1, vii, 12, 14, 28, 34, 41–44, 51, 54, 61, 69, 70, 92, 96, 99, 100, 133, 167
    Eclogues 2, 12, 14, 99, 104, 105, 107, 112, 116, 119, 126, 128, 149, 150, 156, 163, 165
    Eclogues 2.2, 112
    Eclogues 2.69, 104
    Eclogues 3, 126, 164
    Eclogues 4, 48, 64, 65, 69, 70, 74, 76, 77, 164, 167

Eclogues 5, 13, 38, 51, 52, 54, 82, 87, 92–94, 96, 99, 164
Eclogues 5.40, 45
Eclogues 5 (55–59), 138
Eclogues 5.64, 37
Eclogues 6, vii, 8, 14, 75, 121–123, 127, 128, 130, 131, 139, 140, 143, 144, 148, 158, 164
Eclogues 7, 164
Eclogues 8, 14, 111, 113, 119, 145, 164
Eclogues 8.35, 8
Eclogues 9, 14, 41, 42, 51, 53–55, 58–61, 99, 103, 163
Eclogues 10, 12, 14, 105, 121, 127, 141, 143, 158, 159, 164, 165
Georgics, 6, 63, 69, 70, 70n16, 72n18, 73, 75, 77, 126, 127, 148, 163n1, 166, 166n13, 167, 167n14, 168, 169
Georgics 1, 70, 77
Georgics 2, 2n3, 75, 77, 147
Georgics 4, 130, 163
vicissitude, 8, 11, 13, 17, 25–28, 30, 31, 33, 38, 39, 42, 44, 51, 53, 63, 64, 69, 73, 74, 77, 96, 97, 97n43, 131, 160, 164, 167, 167n15
voluptas, 14, 89, 90, 90n30, 99, 105, 106, 108–110, 121, 121n1, 128, 129, 136, 150, 152, 153, 157, 159, 160

war, 33, 44, 45, 59, 59n29, 60, 122, 147, 153, 154n21